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A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR RELIGION

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FROM MOSES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY D. C. SOMERVELL

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written primarily as a contribution towards that most difficult undertaking, the teaching of ' Divinity.'

The teaching of this subject has, presumably, two closely correlated aims: first, it would seek, on the purely intellectual level, to give a clear idea of the nature of the Christian religion and its historical development and achievement; secondly, it would seek to create, as a result of this purely intellectual process, a sense of the overwhelming importance of Christianity and its continuous and increasing vitality. The latter aim will not perhaps be pursued directly in the class-room, but its achievement would result spontaneously from the achievement of the former aim.

At present neither aim is generally achieved. Many reasons for failure might be suggested, but two in particular fall to be mentioned here since they explain the idea of the present book. In the first place we have, in our Bible teaching, been too much occupied with political, biographical, and geographical details, which, from the standpoint of Christian Divinity, are of secondary importance. For what makes ' Bible history ' worth studying at all is the religious history, and the rest is only useful in so far as it explains that.

Secondly, we have far too much limited ' Divinity ' teaching to ' Bible ' teaching. This limitation encourages, it may be

unconsciously but none the less really, the most unfortunate and unchristian idea that the relations of God and Man, if they did not actually terminate round about 100 A.D., became after that date something very much less close and less vital than before. We have a ' Bible period ' in which God acted openly and directly, when religion must have been, it would seem, a comparatively easy matter, and a post-Biblical period when the existence of Divinity was so much less obvious, and the relations of God and Man were so entirely changed that lessons drawn from the Biblical period could only have a very indirect applicability to ourselves. Thus, the more the Bible is studied apart the more remote does religion become from everyday life.

I am not pleading for less study of religion as revealed in the Bible, but for a concentration on the religious aspects of the Bible, together with an extension of the study of Christianity outside Biblical limits. And in saying this I am considering only the secondary school stage. No one would regret more than myself the disappearance of the old Bible stories from the education of childhood : but comparatively little is gained, and much is lost, when they are taught afresh to the exclusion of other subjects during the period of adolescence.

The present book attempts a continuous history of religious development along a single line from the primitive foundations laid by Moses down to the present day. Part I. deals with the Hebrew religion out of which Christianity grew, and covers the last thirteen centuries before Christ. Part II. deals with the foundation of Christianity and its development as a ' rebel ' religion within the Roman Empire, carrying the story down to the end of the fourth century. Part III. contains the history of the Western Church from Augustine down to and including the Reformation. Part IV. is, illogically but perhaps inevitably, limited in scope to England

and Scotland, and outlines the development of religious life and religious thought from the Elizabethan settlement to the present day.

Such an undertaking is beset not only with the pitfalls that lie in the way of all writers of ' outlines,' but also with the special pitfalls of religious controversy. In the earlier parts of the book there are the dilemmas presented by modern criticism and old traditions : in the latter the controversies of Protestant and Catholic. I have not sought to promote the views of any party, but have aimed at bringing out the merits of all alike.

One chapter in the book is critical rather than historical, namely, the first. I rather regret its existence, but my experience as a teacher has proved to me again and again that the first step toward making the history of the Israelites really interesting to boys who have got beyond the childish stage is an examination, sympathetic but also candid, of the sources of the Old Testament. In many circles this will be accepted as obvious. To those where it is not I would say such knowledge is bound to come quickly enough to any boy who is intelligently interested in his religion : if he is left to find out for himself what his teachers concealed from him, he will not only think the worse of his teachers (which perhaps matters little), but may also think the worse of the religion which is considered to stand in need of obscurantist defences. My account probably errs on the side of conservatism and tradition rather than on the other.

The book has been composed in the spare time of a schoolmaster's life and may, I fear, contain some inaccuracies of which I shall be glad to receive notice. It would contain many more but for the kind help of Mr. H. H. Hardy, Headmaster of Cheltenham, and two others who read the work in manuscript.

Two small points remain. In my Biblical quotations I

have taken the liberty of using whatever version seemed most suitable to my purpose, either Authorised or Revised or, in one or two cases, translations made by modern scholars to bring out particular points. Secondly, I have rejected advice rather urgently pressed on me to use the Greek alphabet when quoting Greek words. Now that so many receive a liberal education which entirely excludes Greek, this seems a concession which we, who have learnt Greek, ought to be willing to make for the convenience of others. I have, however, preserved the Greek letters in a few cases where the Greek word can have no interest except to those who know the language.

D. C. SOMERVELL.

TONBRIDGE, *January*, 1922.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE kindness of several correspondents enables me to make a variety of small corrections and improvements in the second edition. The alterations made are, however, not conspicuous, and a class in which some members used the first edition and some the second would not suffer any inconvenience from this fact. The most considerable changes are: on page 297, an emendation of my previous incorrect account of the organisation of the Scottish Church; and on page 326, a paragraph on the work of the Student Christian Movement.

D. C. S.

October, 1922.

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PART I

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

THE STRUCTURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

OUR main authority for the history of the Hebrew or Jewish religion, which Christ inherited and out of which Christianity grew, is the Old Testament. Before we can understand that history it is necessary to form some idea of the nature of that great Library of Sacred Books and of the kind of information we shall be able to get from it. The Bible is still and will of course always be the 'text-book' of Christianity. But if we compare it for a moment with 'text-books' in use for the study of secular subjects we perceive at once an important difference. Our text-books of History or of Chemistry have been written in our own day and for our own use, with our own special needs in view. The Old Testament as we have it to-day was similarly compiled, not for our use but for the use of a Jewish community living two thousand years ago,[1] and with not our but their special needs in view. As I hope to show, the Old Testament can become as valuable to us as it was to these

[1] The collection of the various books of the Old Testament into a Sacred Canon of Scripture, as distinguished from the *writing* of the Books themselves, was accomplished mostly during the two centuries before Christ.

ancient Jews, but for us its values, its true meaning, do not by any means always lie on the surface.

Let us start, however, with a surface impression. What are the contents of the Old Testament?—thirty-nine 'books,' which owe a certain outward similarity to the fact that they are all clothed for us in the magnificent and otherwise unfamiliar English of the early Stuart period. These thirty-nine books would probably be divided by a modern reader who approached them for the first time into five groups.

(i) *Genesis*, which stands alone as an account of 'origins'; first, the origin of the human race—the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, etc.; secondly, the origin of the Hebrew race in the lives of Abraham and three generations of his descendants, and at the end the removal of the family from Palestine to Egypt. The dates in the margin of the Bible indicate that the period covered is 4004 B.C. to 1689 B.C. These dates we owe to the calculations of Dr. Ussher, Archbishop of Dublin in the reign of Charles I., who worked them out from the careful statements in the text as to the ages of the various characters in the stories, but we now know that the earlier date at any rate has no sort of historical value, as we possess evidence of the existence of *civilised* man two thousand years earlier than 4000 B.C.

(ii) *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*. These books describe the leading forth of the Israelites from their Egyptian slavery, and their adventures in their passage across the desert. The last chapter recounts the death of their leader Moses on the threshold of the Promised Land. But by far the greater part of these four books is taken up not with narrative but with laws said to have been delivered to the people by Moses from the slopes of Mount Sinai, or, in Deuteronomy (meaning 'second law') from the slopes of the mountain to the south of Palestine on which he afterwards

died. The dates covered by these books are given in the margin as 1491-1451. This is probably about one hundred and fifty years too early as regards the narrative parts. The laws on the other hand date from widely different periods, as will be shown later.

(iii) *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*. Here we have a fairly continuous history of the Chosen People from the time of their invasion of Palestine down to their conquest by Nebuchadnezzar. The dates given are 1451-588, and from the time of David onwards these dates may be taken as approximately correct. Of the captivity in Babylon which followed, virtually nothing is told, but *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* give some account of the re-establishment of the Jewish community at Jerusalem (dates 536-445). The Books of *Chronicles*, however, do not continue the narrative of the Books of *Kings*, but contain another account of the period described in the Books of *Samuel* and *Kings*. The book of *Ezra* is easily seen to be continuous with *Chronicles*, since the last paragraph of *Chronicles* is used as the first paragraph of *Ezra*: and *Nehemiah* continues *Ezra*. *Ruth* and *Esther* are biographical stories rather than histories.

In these first three groups of books of the Old Testament the reader will find that the work is of diverse character; narratives brimful of romance and poetry and human interest side by side with dry genealogies, lists of names, and masses of detailed regulations regarding sacrifices and other religious ceremonial. A moment's thought will suggest the probability that these different types of work do not all come from the same author.

(iv) *Job*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Song of Solomon* (or *Song of Songs*). Here we pass from History to Poetry. *Job* is a lyrical drama or dialogue, dealing, by means of a kind of parable, with the old problem why God, since He is just, allows the righteous to suffer instead of apportioning suffering

as a punishment for sin. *The Psalms* are a collection, or several combined collections, of one hundred and fifty hymns. *The Proverbs* are in part collections of pithy sayings or epigrams, and in part hymns similar in character to the Psalms though celebrating 'wisdom' rather than righteousness. *Ecclesiastes* contains further collections of epigrams, but in the main it is a somewhat melancholy essay on the Vanity of Life. *The Song of Solomon* is a rapturous and highly fanciful love song, or collection of love songs, which was included in the Scriptures as an allegory of Jehovah's marriage with Israel.

(v) *Isaiah and the following sixteen books.* These are books of prophecy or preaching, collections of sermons we might almost call them, each collection being headed by the name of its author. Three books here mark exceptions from the general character of the rest. *Lamentations* is a group of psalms on the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, associated with the name of Jeremiah. *Daniel* (first six chapters) and *Jonah* contain not prophecy but biographical stories, and thus resemble *Ruth* and *Esther* rather than the other prophetical books. The last six chapters of *Daniel* are an example of the so-called 'apocalyptic literature,' not found elsewhere in the Bible except in a few chapters of *Ezekiel* and in the *Apocalypse* or *Revelation of St. John the Divine* at the end of the New Testament, a form of preaching by means of strange visions of 'beasts' and other supernatural symbols.

Now it is obvious that we should learn much from these books which must otherwise remain obscure, if we could discover when and for what purpose they were written. This is especially so with the historical books. The modern scientific historian compiles his narrative from documents as closely contemporary as possible with the period about which he is writing. But the first historians of primitive peoples relied mostly upon unwritten traditions, the common

memories, the popular ballads, of their tribe, and these were liable to all kinds of subtle processes of alteration as memory faded or as fresh circumstances led people to view the past in a different light. Our modern hard and fast distinction between history and fiction simply did not exist for such writers. Their attitude of mind is nearer to that of the poet than the historian, and the author of an historical poem will compose his work in no spirit of antiquarian accuracy, but as one inspired with a noble message to his own readers, a message he can best convey by means of a tale drawn from past history, but freely rearranged to suit his purpose. Even if he should aim at the modern type of accuracy he will have no means of achieving it. Many versions of the tale he intends to use he will find already in existence. Each will present differences from all the rest and no possible method is available to him for deciding which is the truth. He combines such elements as best suit his purpose and leaves the rest. His choice will provide us with the clue to his own character and outlook, and the character and outlook of his times.

Thus, to take an extreme instance, the story of the Creation and the Fall tells us, as we now know, nothing whatever about the origin of the world and of human life : but it may tell us a great deal about the religious ideas of the Hebrews at the time when the story was composed, if we can discover when it was composed.

During the last hundred years or so an immense work of scientific investigation has been carried through regarding the composition of the Old Testament. Much in detail remains to be done, but the main facts are now established almost beyond dispute ; and it is not too much to say that they have revolutionised our ideas about the Old Testament as completely as Natural Science has, during the same period, revolutionised our ideas about the origins of life and variations of species.

These discoveries have been of a startling character and

have upset old familiar ideas to which religious sentiment had naturally become attached. Hence it was no uncommon thing fifty years ago or even less for devout persons to regard Biblical Criticism as something hostile to religious faith. Such a view sprang from a mistaken idea as to the nature of the Divine Inspiration or Revelation contained in the Bible. This mistaken idea, reduced to its simplest terms, assumed that God guided the hands of the writers of the Bible so that they wrote nothing that was not absolutely and eternally true. There is no need to-day to show how untenable this idea of 'verbal inspiration' is. What God revealed to His Chosen People was not a Bible for them to copy out, but the fundamental truths of religion. These He revealed, through Moses and through the Prophets, and, at the same time, as is His way, He left his Chosen People free to make what they could of it, to accept or to reject. The Bible is the record both of the revelation and of the manner in which it was received, and, in large measure, rejected. The more criticism can tell us the better shall we be able to understand both God's part and man's part in the story. The criticism itself is almost entirely the work not of atheists and infidels but of men quite as devout as any of those who have been shocked by the results of their labours.

What follows is a general account of the composition of the Old Testament as revealed by modern research.[1] In reading it, bear in mind the following general dates:

Abraham,	- - - -	about 2100?
Moses,	- - - -	,, 1300.
David,	- - - -	,, 1000.
Elijah,	- - - -	,, 850.
The Captivity,	- - -	,, 600.
The career of Ezra,	- -	,, 450.
Wars of Judas Maccabaeus,	-	,, 160.

[1] For the sake of clearness and brevity I have stated as ascertained facts what are actually only extremely probable suppositions on which the great bulk of modern scholars are agreed.

Let us begin with the first six books of the Bible, which modern scholars group together as the Hexateuch (Greek 'hex' = Latin *sex* = six). These books consist partly of narratives of events down to the time of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, and partly of law.

To take the narrative parts first. Sometime in the ninth century, about the time of Elijah, a collection was made in written form of the ancient and hitherto probably mainly unwritten traditions of the Hebrew peoples. This collection was made in Judah, the southern kingdom. About a hundred years later, say 750, about the time of Amos, the earliest prophet to leave a written book, and only thirty years before the extinction of the northern kingdom, another such collection of the old traditions was made in the northern kingdom. These two collections were subsequently combined, but we know that there were originally two from certain differences of style and outlook. The first collection is known as J from the fact that it gives God the name Jehovah,[1] the special name of the god of the Hebrews, and thus corresponding say to the Latin Jupiter; the later collection is known as E because it uses the name Elohim, a general term for a god or gods, and thus corresponding to the Latin *deus* or *di*. The writers can also be distinguished by their religious attitude. J is anthropomorphic; that is to say, he represents God as moving familiarly on earth, 'walking in the garden' of Eden, or personally visiting and talking with Abraham: E on the other hand conceives God as an invisible being of the skies, manifest to man only in visions. They differ also on various unimportant details, and the editor in his respect for both texts has allowed the differences to appear in his combined narrative. A curious example may be found in the story of the ill-treatment of Joseph by his brethren. According to J Joseph was sold to Ishmaelites; according to E to Midianites. Owing to the curiously 'uncritical methods'

[1] More correctly Yahweh or Jahveh, but I propose to use the old familiar spelling.

(as we should now say) of the editor, our Bible now reads "And behold a travelling company of Ishmaelites came . . . and Judah said . . . Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites . . . and there passed by Midianites, merchantmen . . . and they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt. . . . And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar," (Gen. xxxvii. 25-36).

Two questions arise. What were these traditions? and, why were they thus compiled and written down?

The traditions of the Hebrew people served with them the many and varied purposes that such traditions serve with all primitive peoples. They were the embodiment of the national memory, the achievement of the national thought. They enshrined the primitive religion, the primitive conceptions of science, the primitive conceptions of history, and these not separately but all as part so to speak of a single subject. Thus the story of Abraham and Lot is primitive religion inasmuch as it expresses the loving-kindness and long-suffering of God and His readiness to listen to Abraham's prayer on behalf of his kinsman; primitive science inasmuch as it offers an explanation (though a wrong one) of the origin of the Dead Sea; primitive history inasmuch as it attributes to Abraham, the ancestor of Israel, his descendants' preference for the hill country rather than the valleys.

Why were the traditions thus compiled and written down? Not, we may be sure, from any such purpose as might lead a modern scholar to piece together the history of the distant past,—not from any disinterested love of learning merely for itself. They were compiled by the prophets, and the whole aim of the prophets was to reform the religious life of the people of their own day. Thus it is likely enough that the compilers did more than copy the old traditions; they *improved* them, breathing into them a religious exaltation to which earlier generations had never risen.

What precisely was the fortune of these books during the next five hundred years we do not know, but it is certain that

somewhere around 400 B.C., after the Return from Captivity and the establishment of that rigid Jewish community whose history lies between the Old and New Testaments, which finally crucified Jesus Christ, another writer, called for convenience P (=priestly), compiled a kind of chronological outline of the driest character, the purpose of which apparently was to prove that the Jews were God's chosen people by means of a genealogy connecting them with Adam.

Last of all, a century or so later, a final editor combined all the above material, dovetailing the various parts together as neatly as he could, but, in his anxiety to preserve all, not always very careful to make sure that his various extracts did not contradict one another.

Into this scheme we must conceive the legal portions to have been fitted. Here it is even easier to distinguish three wholly distinct works of very different dates.

(i) In *Exodus* xx.-xxiii. and xxiv. 3-8 we have a very primitive body of law known as the Book of the Covenant. This may well be the oldest passage in the Bible, and date from Moses himself.

(ii) The Book of *Deuteronomy* consists of a series of noble discourses intermingled with regulations aimed at securing purity of worship in the Temple or Tabernacle. These discourses are attributed to Moses, as the old hero's farewell message to his people delivered on the slopes of Nebo, the mountain which in the final chapter he ascends to meet his mysterious end. But this is merely a literary device of the author, for the discourses are plainly addressed to a people living under a monarchy and long familiar with God's law, from which they are described as having frequently lapsed. There are very good reasons for thinking that Deuteronomy is, in fact, the "Book of the Laws of the Lord" published so impressively in the reign of Josiah in B.C. 621 (see p. 36).[1]

(iii) There remains the large mass of legislation, partly moral but more largely ceremonial, which fills the whole of

[1] II. Kings xxii., xxiii.

Leviticus, most of *Numbers*, and some of the later chapters of *Exodus*. These laws belong to very different stages in Israel's development: just as in our own English law, regulations made last month and unrepealed statutes of Edward III. may coexist side by side. But what we have in the Bible is an 'edition' of these miscellaneous laws dating from a late period, after the restoration of the Jewish Church by Ezra.

The other books can for our present purpose be more shortly dealt with. *Judges* consists very largely of early material dating from a period not much later than that of the Judges themselves, and its barbaric character has been but little softened by its later editors.

The two Books of *Samuel* are a compilation by a late editor from two ancient sources. In his case, however, the two sources belong, as it were, to opposite political and religious parties; and their discrepancies, which the final editor has left quite plain for all to see, cannot but warn us, were warning needed, that the 'historical' books of the Old Testament are not to be regarded as history in the modern sense of the word. The earlier writer is a royalist, and he represents Samuel as anointing Saul by Jehovah's command in order that Israel may have a leader against the Philistines. The later writer is an anti-royalist, no doubt influenced by the wickedness displayed by the later kings whom his fellow-prophets denounced. He represents Samuel and not Saul as the conqueror of the Philistines. The people then demand a king, a request which Samuel views as rebellion against Jehovah. At the bidding of Jehovah, however, he consents, and Saul is chosen king by lot, after Samuel has first plainly told the people that kingship will lead to tyranny and oppression.

With the two Books of *Kings* we border on the period in which the narrative parts of the Old Testament were first collected in writing. These books are mainly based on narratives nearly contemporary with the events they describe.

They, however, have been edited by a 'Deuteronomic writer,' that is to say, a writer influenced by the Deuteronomic teaching which was only published in the reign of Josiah, almost at the end of the period covered, *i.e.* Solomon to the Captivity, 980-586. The editor is responsible for the summary condemnation—"He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," which concludes the account of nearly every reign, the reason being that these pre-Deuteronomic kings conducted sacrificial worship elsewhere than in Jerusalem, which was contrary to the Deuteronomic teaching. Such censure fell unfairly on good and bad alike. It is as if a Puritan historian, editing a history of England, were to have written as a footnote to every reign previous to Henry VIII., "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," on the ground that adoration of the Virgin Mary and invocation of the Saints under Roman Catholic rites prevailed during the reign.

Chronicles, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, which form a single work, were written at a late date, about 300 B.C., probably by a Levite of the restored Jewish Temple. The writer, whose methods are much the same as those of P, the latest contributor to the Hexateuch, begins with a series of genealogies tracing descent from Adam, and then proceeds to a history of the kings from David onwards, ignoring however the northern kingdom. He views the past through the spectacles of the present and imagines the elaborate ceremonial of the restored Jewish Church to have existed in the time of David. David and Solomon he glorifies as faithful observers of this law, and the Captivity he regards as the Divine punishment for its non-observance by their successors. Throughout, his main interest is in the ceremonial of the Temple, and, owing to his late date, he is inferior as an authority to *Kings*. *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* contain, however, amidst many genealogies and lists of names, some personal memoirs of the two great men, the priest and the soldier, who together established the Jewish Church of the last four and a half centuries B.C.

It is difficult to assign precise dates to the poetical books: *Job*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Song of Songs*, and the half-poetical *Ecclesiastes*. In the main they all belong to the period after the return from the Captivity. Opinion is still much divided as to the date of most of the Psalms. The Psalter has been well called "The Hymn Book of the Second Temple" (*i.e.* the Temple built after the return from captivity); no doubt the collection was made for the purpose of the worship of the Temple. But just as the hymns of our own modern hymn-books date from every period from the fourth to the twentieth centuries, so the psalms may date from every century from the eleventh, the time of David, to the third or the second century B.C. Many modern scholars, however, are very doubtful as to the possibility of any of the psalms coming from the hand of King David himself, and believe that the great bulk were written during and after the Captivity. If this be so, it throws a valuable light on the religious life of the centuries that lie between the time of the Captivity and the coming of Our Lord. We are too apt to think of that period as a time when inspiration was dead, and Law and the unprofitable Pharisees supreme. It is important to realise that there also flourished during that period a spirit of intimate religious devotion finding expression in sublime poetry: that Christ came to live in a community that produced the Psalmists as well as the Pharisees.

The results of modern criticism as applied to the parts of the Old Testament already mentioned may seem a little bewildering, as introducing many doubts in place of the old familiar certainties or supposed certainties. It is in connection with the *Prophetic Books* that the services of the critics have been most unquestionable. In former days this part of the Old Testament was, to tell the truth, a desert of obscurities, dotted here and there with famous outbursts of eloquence, which even so suffered from the obscurity of their context. Modern criticism has established on a firm basis the individuality of each prophet in his proper historical

circumstances, and through the ' book ' revealed the ' man.' The written prophecies cover a period of at least three hundred years, from *Amos*, 760 B.C., to *Malachi*, about 450 B.C. One or two small books and parts of books may be later still, and the book of *Daniel* (which is not strictly prophecy at all but a narrative introducing a series of apocalyptic visions) has been found to belong to the period of Judas Maccabaeus, 160 B.C., and the Story of Jonah also belongs to a late date.

Now, in what light should we view the results of modern scientific research as above described ?

Firstly, we should rejoice in the discovery of this as of all other truth, but more particularly in the discovery of such truth as throws light on the history of man's prime concern, religion. The history of religion is the history both of man's attitude towards God, and also of ' the ways of God to Man.' Any help that science may give us towards solving the problems of religion will be welcomed by all except those self-satisfied (and to that extent irreligious) persons who feel that the problems of religion are already settled, and that our imperfect human minds have already done all that is possible in the way of solving the Insoluble and defining the Infinite. For them there can be no fresh progress, no fresh discovery in religion. Were that so, then God's work for Man were done and finished, which surely we cannot believe it to be.

Secondly, notice that while much is gained, nothing of value is lost though its aspect be changed. The Twenty-third psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," has no less a message of comfort if we find that it was written not by David but by an unknown poet centuries later. The noble sermons of Deuteronomy are not the less inspired because they were not taken down from the lips of Moses.

Even where modern criticism has thrown doubt on the course of events, as in the case of the origin of the kingship, or removed a great figure such as Abraham from the realm

of history to the realm of legend,[1] though much supposed 'history' is swept away, not a shadow of doubt is thereby thrown on the fact of God's revelation. We must learn, however, to see that revelation in a new light, and to try so to see it is the purpose of the three following chapters. On the whole, when so seen, the story becomes much more inspiring, because much more progressive. According to the old view the Israelites of Moses' day started fully equipped as regards religious insight, and the whole story that followed was one of backslidings. God had no more to reveal after Moses' day till the time of Christ. He could only intervene to remind His people of what He had revealed already. According to the modern view the work of Moses was but a foundation, and the great prophets stand out as marking, not a series of restorations, which is dull, but a series of great ventures into the Unknown, of steps forward in the revelation of God to Man. The history of religion becomes, like the history of science, a tale of pioneering and discovery.

[1] Modern writers differ greatly as to how far the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph can be regarded as history. The safest plan is therefore to begin our definitely historical narrative with Moses. This need not imply a definite denial of the historical reality of the Patriarchs.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL FROM MOSES TO ELIJAH, 1300-850 B.C.

THE last chapter has given us the following important facts. (i) Our Old Testament as it has come down to us was almost entirely composed during two periods, the period of the Prophets, extending roughly from Elijah to the end of the Captivity (850-450), and the period of the Scribes from Ezra onwards (450-160). (ii) The writers, being greatly concerned with the needs of their own generation and very little concerned with what to-day would be called historical scholarship, have viewed the past in the light of what was to them the present, and attributed to the periods of which they write ideas and institutions which belong only to their own later day.

The present chapter attempts to sketch the history of the religion of Israel during the five centuries from its beginnings in Moses down to the time of Elijah and the first 'historians' J and E. It is already plain that we are here very largely dependent on conjecture, and that only a very general outline is possible. Indeed we may content ourselves with attempting to answer two questions only.

(i) What was the religion which Moses gave Israel, and how did it differ from the paganism of the Semitic or Arabic tribes from which Israel was sprung and amongst which Israel lived?

(ii) How far was the religion of Moses either preserved or

developed during the five centuries that follow; that is to say, during the period of the Judges, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, down to Ahab and Elijah?

(i) *The Religion of Moses.* The religions of the world are commonly divided into two classes, polytheistic (worshipping many gods), and monotheistic (worshipping one god). Neither of these terms, however, is suitable for describing the religion of the Semitic tribes of the Old Testament period. Each tribe normally worshipped one god only, the god of the tribe. This tribal god, from whom the tribe believed itself descended, was conceived as a kind of invisible king, keenly interested in the political and military welfare of his tribe, its champion in war, its guardian in peace, and, like an earthly king, liable to fits of ill-humour, and very ready to punish the tribe if it behaved disrespectfully towards him and neglected the religious ceremonies which were the symbols of its obedience to him. Like an earthly king, the tribal god was not concerned with the personal morality of his people, except in so far as it affected the political or military efficiency of the tribe. Again, like an earthly king, the tribal god's power was limited,—limited by the power of other tribes and their tribal gods. For these Semitic tribes no more denied the existence of other tribal gods than an Englishman would to-day deny the existence of the President of the United States; only, they held that such gods were no concern of theirs.

This type of religion, which combines characteristics both of polytheism and of monotheism, is sometimes called henotheism (worship of one god), as distinct from monotheism, which properly means worship of the only god. (Greek 'heno-' = Latin *unus*: Greek 'mono-' = Latin *solus*.)

Henotheism was always liable, however, to drift into polytheism. Suppose you made an alliance with a neighbouring tribe: it would then be common courtesy and common sense to pay some respect to the gods of your allies.

It was Solomon's policy of foreign alliances which led him not only to multiply his wives but to introduce 'heathen' worships at Jerusalem. Conversely, the religious leaders of a later date vehemently opposed foreign alliances and stood for a policy of 'glorious isolation' in the political sphere, as the only means of preserving the purity of Israel's religion.

Such we may assume to have been the religious ideas of the Israelites of the Exodus, the ground on which Moses had to build (for the evidence seems to show that the Israelites did *not* bring with them from Egypt the religion of their comparatively highly civilised Egyptian taskmasters). What then did Moses achieve?

Moses came from the desert with a message of deliverance to his distressed and enslaved fellow-countrymen. His message was that Jehovah, the God of Mount Sinai away in the desert, symbolical of freedom from the yoke of a crushing alien civilisation, would help them to freedom if they would first bestir themselves and face the enormous risks of insurrection. It is only on such terms that God will help Man to whom He has given free will.

The miracle of rebellion after centuries of slavery was accomplished. How great a miracle this was we may realise when we remember that during the American Civil War, when half the States were fighting for the freedom of the negroes, the slaves hardly bestirred themselves at all to assist their deliverers. Slavery crushes out at last even the impulse towards freedom.

Moses led the Israelites into the desert, and there, as tradition related, a solemn covenant was made between Jehovah the delivering God and His people. This event marks the birth of the Hebrew nation, and of the religion from which world-wide Christianity is descended.

There is only one point on which we can be quite certain that this religion differed from ordinary Semitic henotheism. "Other Semitic peoples believed that the god-people relation,

which subsisted between them and their gods, rested on some fact of physical generation; their god had begotten them as his children, or else it was based upon some primeval condition of things which was not defined. But the god-people relation between Israel and Jehovah rested upon a definite covenant—a covenant towards the formation of which Jehovah had taken the first steps. He had sought them in their affliction in Egypt and had in mercy brought them to Sinai. And here, at this moment remembered by everyone, a voluntary agreement was entered into." [1]

Religions have been classified as nature religions and historical religions.[2] Ancestor worship and the worship of the sun or the moon or a sacred river are nature religions. The religion of Israel, like Christianity or Mohammedanism, is an historical religion, originating in a real and verifiable historical event. The religion of Israel almost certainly owes to its historical origin certain characteristics distinguishing it from the outset from the nature religions of neighbouring tribes.

The covenant was in itself a moral relationship, and this fact may well have led Moses to condemn at the outset various forms of religious ceremonial common to the neighbouring nature religions. Among the Canaanite tribes, tribal ancestor-gods were worshipped with human sacrifices, and, what must seem even stranger, with an organised system of ceremonial acts of immorality. Though the Israelites did not keep clear of these hideous errors there seems to have been always a tradition of opposition to them, and it seems natural to suppose that that tradition descends direct from Moses.

Again, the fact that Jehovah had, of His own spontaneous loving-kindness, *chosen* His people instead of merely beget-

[1] Hamilton, *The People of God*, vol. i. page 43.

[2] The term 'nature religion' is used rather than 'natural religion,' because writers have often distinguished 'natural religion' (religion discovered by man's unaided faculties) from 'revealed religion' (religion specially revealed by God).

ting them after the manner of all parents good or bad, may well have led Israel to realise a little more than their neighbours the transcendent moral character of their God, and His concern for man's spiritual welfare as well as for the political and military welfare of the tribe.

Further than this we cannot go. The religion of Israel during the five centuries following Moses was, even at its best, only henotheism. Jehovah was only one god among many, in spite of His special characteristics; and He was regarded mainly as the leader of Israel's host, who was apt to resent honour given to other gods: of His moral requirements we hear comparatively little. He is, first and foremost, a 'Lord of Hosts,' champion of Israel's hosts fighting both just and unjust wars against their neighbours.

(ii) *The five centuries after Moses.* The Book of *Joshua* suggests, and it was at one time generally supposed, that the Israelites rapidly conquered and virtually exterminated the Canaanite tribes inhabiting the Promised Land, and formed therein a compact homogeneous kingdom. This was far from being the case, as, indeed, the following book, *Judges*, shows. Such exterminations of native inhabitants are rare in history, except when, as in certain regions of the British Empire, the invading people are of a totally different race and immeasurably higher civilisation. Indeed, early English history here furnishes a close parallel to the history of Israel. Fifty years ago it was quite generally believed by one school of historians that the Anglo-Saxons virtually exterminated the ancient Britons or drove them into Wales and Cornwall, and that the history of Roman Britain was a detached episode connected only by geographical considerations with English History proper. We now know, however, that there was no such extermination, that Saxons and Britons survived side by side and intermarried, and that the Saxons borrowed many of their ideas and institutions from the more civilised 'Romanised' Britons.

In the same way the Canaanites survived and became assimilated with the Israelites, and were responsible for much in Hebrew history. They were, in fact, by economic standards, the more highly civilised people of the two. From them the Hebrews learnt the arts of agriculture. Now " the Canaanites had no one national deity, but worshipped local agricultural gods called Baalim, who were supposed to make the soil fertile and the harvest plentiful. These Baalim were celebrated in the three great agricultural festivals, at the beginning and end of the wheat harvest, and at the in-gathering of the grapes in the autumn. This service was marked by specially gross indulgence in feasting and drinking, and since the worship of the Baals was accompanied by that of the Ashtaroths, or female goddesses of fecundity, immorality was unrestrained." [1]

It was almost inevitable that the Hebrews should take over this ' nature religion ' of agriculture from the people who taught them the arts of agriculture. Had they been any ordinary Semitic tribe they would probably have also abandoned the worship of Jehovah, located in now distant Sinai. This they did not do, though it is likely that the worship of Jehovah owed its survival even more to its military than to its moral qualities. Jehovah stood for united Israel; and foreign invasions, here as elsewhere in history, supplied the cement of national unity. After each triumph of the Judges we read, in the words of the later historian, that " the land had rest " for a certain number of years, and " the people did evil in the sight of the Lord " ; that is to say, their main concern was with agriculture and the Baalim of agriculture. Then came another invasion, and another judge who revived the worship of Jehovah as the symbol of national patriotism. Thus Gideon's battle-cry is " The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." [2]

The importance of Samuel seems to lie chiefly in the fact that he saw that national unity and the worship of Jehovah

[1] Hamilton, *op. cit.* p. 45. [2] Judges vii. 20.

stood or fell together, and therefore established the monarchy, for the tradition that represents the demand for a king as a sin against Jehovah is certainly a late tradition. The kings stood for the pre-eminence of Jehovah over the Baalim exactly as our own sixteenth and seventeenth century kings stood for the Church of England against both Rome and Nonconformity. The Church of England represented English unity as against the divisions of the Nonconformists and English independence as against the claims of Rome.

The building of Solomon's Temple on the site of the old Canaanite fortress conquered by David may be taken as the triumph of the religion of Jehovah over the Canaanite Baalim.

Yet the religion that thus triumphed was a very imperfect religion ; and its imperfections, combined with the political successes of the kings, were exposing it to fresh pitfalls. The builder of the Temple of Jehovah also built temples for Moloch and for Chemosh, and the rest.[1] In doing all this Solomon and his successors had no intention of abandoning the religion of Jehovah. The editor of the Book of *Kings* accuses them of doing so, but he wrote under the influence of the purer religion of the prophets, and Solomon's ' henotheism ' seemed as unnatural to him as it does to us. Solomon's Jehovah, however, was only the God of Israel, and he did not feel that Jehovah would be outraged by diplomatic courtesies to Jehovah's colleagues, the gods of the nations with whom Israel was in alliance.

This tendency reached its climax a little more than a hundred years later in Ahab, a king of the Northern Kingdom (876-854). Ahab was dominated by his Tyrian wife, Jezebel, and the worship of Jehovah was dominated by that of the

[1] I. Kings xi. 5-8. " For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. . . . Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."

Tyrian Baal. It was this state of affairs that provoked the protest of Elijah, the forerunner of the great prophets. In order to understand the position of Elijah it is necessary to give some account of the origin and character of the prophetical movement.

Hebrew prophecy, like the other elements in the Hebrew religion, can be traced back to a point at which it is scarcely, if at all, distinguishable from parallel features in ordinary Semitic 'heathenism.' The Hebrew word for prophet, as also the Greek word prophētēs, does not mean a foreteller of the future, but an interpreter, one who is 'spoken through,' or in the language of modern spiritualism, a medium. Anyone who knows anything of Arab countries to-day knows of the Mohammedan fakirs, or the dancing dervishes, 'holy men' subject to strange visitations or trances, whose often unintelligible outpourings are regarded as divine, mainly perhaps because there seems to be no human explanation of them. Not very different must have been that gift of 'speaking with tongues' in the early Christian churches, which St. Paul discouraged as unprofitable. The Bible offers a vivid example of this in the story of the prophets of Baal who contested with Elijah on Mount Carmel; these prophets "leaped about the altar . . . and cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances till the blood gushed out upon them." [1]

Not very far removed above these must have been the wild unkempt prophets of Jehovah in the days of Samuel and Saul. The story is difficult to interpret, but it appears that Saul, after the emotional crisis occasioned by his selection as king, fell in with a company of these prophets. Samuel foretells it: "The spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man." [2] And people said "Is Saul also among the prophets?" not meaning "How is it that such a worldly-minded man finds himself in the company

[1] I. Kings xviii. 26, 28. [2] I. Samuel x. 6 *sq.*

of such pious people? " but rather, " How comes a person of such distinction to find himself in such low company? "[1]

But it was not long before a higher strain appeared. Few figures in Old Testament history are more impressive than that of the prophet Nathan, who comes to rebuke David's sin in murdering Uriah, and, after his fable of the ewe lamb, points the moral bluntly with his abrupt " Thou art the man."[2] Here at once we have the very kernel of Hebrew prophecy—Jehovah sending His interpreter to rebuke the mightiest in the land for private sins of which no other Semitic tribal god had ever taken account.

But the two types of prophet, the prophet of the God that cares for righteousness and the mere ' medium ' long subsisted side by side. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the ' false prophets,' as their enemies the great prophets called them, were frauds or impostors. In the great bulk of cases it is reasonable to suppose that their prophetic ecstasies were as genuine as those of the Mohammedan dervish of to-day. At the same time we must hold that, though not fraudulent, they were certainly ' false,' inasmuch as their ecstasies were not divine inspirations, and their messages came from elsewhere than from God, who was now, under His chosen name of Jehovah, beginning to reveal more of His Nature and His Will to man than man could ever before have grasped. When two sets of prophets come forward with contradictory messages it is possible that both may honestly believe themselves to be speaking the word of God. It is quite impossible that both should be right in so believing. And how were people to decide between them? The only way was to compare the messages they gave.

The Book of *Kings* contains a curious story in which the two schools of prophecy, the new and the old, are brought face to face, though on a question of politics rather than religion or morals.[3] Ahab is in doubt whether to undertake

[1] Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 13. [2] II. Samuel xii. 7.
[3] I. Kings xxii.

an expedition against Ramoth-Gilead. His four hundred 'false prophets,' men to whom no doubt Ahab's moral character, already denounced by Elijah, was a matter of indifference, urged him to pursue what one might call, in modern journalese, "his policy of reckless imperialism." One prophet, however, Micaiah, had the strength to stand alone and foretell disaster. Being then challenged to defend his message he does not, as one would expect, assert that the four hundred have held no communication with Jehovah, but prefers to suggest that Jehovah, to punish Ahab for his sins, has " put a lying spirit into the mouths of his prophets " in order to lure him to destruction.

In Elijah himself the dervish origin of prophecy is clearly traceable. He is a wild man of the desert; he girds up his loins and runs before Ahab's chariot from Carmel to the entrance of Jezreel: he withdraws and renews his strength in the southern desert beyond Beersheba, whence the religion of Jehovah had drawn its first inspiration. Whatever we may think of the miraculous tales in which the life of Elijah is embedded, it is manifest from them that Elijah was a man of astonishingly vivid personality.

All this side of him, however, is apt to be the reverse of impressive to the sceptical and unimaginative modern reader, who finds " the chariot of fire and horses of fire "[1] an obstacle rather than a help to taking Elijah seriously. For us the important question is: What did Elijah preach? Two great lessons, which are the corner-stones to the prophetical movement:

(i) Jehovah is the only God with whom Israel may have dealings. " How long halt ye," he says, " between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, serve him, but if Baal be God, serve him." It is but a step from this to the monotheism of the later prophets, who preach that Jehovah, the God who chose Israel as His people, is also the God of the whole earth, and that all other gods are non-existent.

[1] II. Kings ii. 11.

(ii) Jehovah will punish wickedness. Ahab, to secure for himself the vineyard of Naboth, had permitted Jezebel to organise a judicial murder. Naboth had been put on trial for blasphemy and convicted on the evidence of hired perjurers, and his property had thus been confiscated to 'the Crown.' Elijah is inspired to go and denounce Ahab. "And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah."

What had Elijah accomplished when he died? Apparently nothing whatever. The blood-stained house of Ahab was still reigning, and the avenger, Jehu, whom Elisha, perhaps inadvisedly, supported, proved as bad as Ahab. Idolatry and immorality continued to flourish side by side. Such is generally the fate of the prophets in all ages. In the eyes of posterity, however, Elijah's achievement figured as second only to that of Moses. He had founded the great prophetic movement, and tradition, always seeking for history to repeat itself, was persuaded that he and none other would return again to open the Messianic Age.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPHETS (760–537 B.C.)

WE now approach what is incomparably the greatest achievement in religious history before the ministry of Christ, the achievement of the prophets whose teaching is preserved in the later books of the Old Testament. We shall have to pass in review a series of men of genius who, undismayed by ridicule or persecution, poured forth in a torrent of inspired passion a message so new to the world, so utterly in defiance of the notions of all their contemporaries, that it is difficult to conceive how they can have come by it without that direct intercourse with God which they certainly claimed. As was natural under the circumstances, the external and immediate results of the work of each of them looked much more like failure than success. Each prophet must have seemed to himself to be dashing upon the rocks of invincible sinfulness and stupidity. Only a later generation, who could survey the whole field and measure the progress of three centuries, could know that the achievement was perhaps the most astonishing in the history of the human mind. The first prophets preached to an almost completely paganised society: the last, three centuries later, saw the foundation of the Jewish Church, the impregnable citadel of a religion which was to withstand successfully the philosophy of Greece, the political oppression of Rome, and even to-day, twenty-five centuries afterwards, build its synagogues in every city of Europe. Nay more, though itself averse from missionary enterprise, it

became the parent of both the great proselytising religions of modern times—Christianity and Mohammedanism.

The Old Testament contains sixteen books bearing the names of prophets. The number of prophets represented is, however, somewhat greater, since some of the books are the work of more than one hand. The Book of *Isaiah*, for example, contains the work of two of the greatest prophets, the second living a hundred and fifty years after the first.[1] Each of the prophets has, of course, his own distinctive personality, and his own place in history. At the same time each builds on and as a rule emphatically repeats the main ideas of his predecessors. The present chapter takes the six greatest prophets in chronological order, and aims at showing how, by their combined and successive efforts extending over more than two centuries, the unique structure of Israel's faith was built up. Some of the lesser prophets belong to a later date and are mentioned in the next chapter; for that chapter also is reserved, in the main, the problem of the contribution of the prophets to the expectation of a Messiah which was widespread among the Jews of Our Lord's day.

(i) *Amos*, 760 B.C. About a hundred years had passed since Elijah's day. Jeroboam II. was on the throne of the Northern Kingdom, the most splendid and successful monarch since Solomon. Israel was once again the greatest of the small states that lay between the mighty empires of the Nile and the Euphrates. Furthermore, during the past century progress of another kind had been unusually rapid. Israel was passing from a purely agricultural to a commercial phase. Wealth was rapidly increasing, and with it a luxurious 'idle rich' class, such as had never before been seen in the land. "There were palaces of ivory in Samaria, and houses of hewn stone without number, castles and forts,

[1] Probably it contains the work of *four* prophets. Only two of them will concern us here, but the fact is worth mentioning as an example of the detailed work of modern criticism. For the allocation of chapters between the various prophets see footnotes on pp. 32 and 46.

horses and chariots, power and pomp, splendour and riches, wherever one might turn. The rich lay on couches of ivory with damask cushions; daily they slew the fatted calf, drank the most costly wines, and anointed themselves with precious oils." [1] On its own small scale it was a period like the first half of the nineteenth century in England. In both periods there was, among the rich, much shrewd and vigorous energy and a rather coarse magnificence, and side by side with it an atrocious oppression of the poor. As so often happens when the rich are growing richer the poor were growing poorer, and society as a whole was growing more and more unsound.

As for religion, Elijah might seem to have lived in vain. Jehovah was, of course, still the national God, but His worship was practically indistinguishable from that of any other Semitic deity. It was a comparatively small matter that He was worshipped under the semblance of a calf at Bethel and Dan. What mattered far more was that His religion seemed to have finally lost whatever connection it had ever established with right conduct.

At one of the official festivals to Jehovah at Bethel a rude unkempt herdsman appeared, Amos of Tekoa. This was his message:

"I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel . . . I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream . . . I will not turn away the punishment of Israel; because they have sold the righteous for

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 39.

silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes . . . Ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right . . . The end of my people Israel is at hand, I can no longer forgive, saith the Lord . . . Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided; line from line, and thou shalt die in a polluted land." [1]

Language such as this is so familiar to us, read year by year in decorous ritual from the lecterns of our churches, that it requires an effort of the imagination to realise how blasphemous, how *mad* it must have sounded to its first hearers. It contradicted the fundamental doctrine of the orthodoxy of the day, that prosperity is the divine reward of virtue. " Jehovah displeased with the sacrifices of Bethel? How obviously absurd, when the king is so mighty, and we so rich and prosperous! And the threat that Jehovah is going to ' join the enemy '—the Assyrian, whom we have ceased to be afraid of, and destroy His own people! How monstrously unpatriotic! Who ever heard of a god behaving in that suicidal manner? It is true gods are sometimes unsuccessful in securing victory for their own people—one cannot expect too much—but for a god to *desert*, and all because of some trivialities in the law courts and elsewhere which have no more to do with religion than one's private life has! " [2]

So they must have talked. But Amos had seen what possibly no human being had been privileged to see before. Jehovah is not the god of Israel only: He is God—God of all the world. He has chosen Israel as His instrument, but the instrument is breaking in His hand. The fall of the people of Israel will be the victory of God, the triumph of justice and truth over sin and delusion.

[1] Amos vii. 14, 15, v. 21-24, ii. 6, v. 12, viii. 2, vii. 17.

[2] I have already compared these people with our prosperous early Victorians. It is related that on coming out of church Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first prime minister, remarked in disapproval of the sermon, " Religion is all very well, but it's going a bit far when it claims to interfere with a man's private life."

Forty years later Israel fell and disappeared for ever from human history. To regard Amos' prophecy as a clever political forecast would be absurd. Under Jeroboam II. the political factors that brought the fall were simply not yet visible. Amos' deductions were based on a knowledge of God, not on a knowledge of politics.

Thus far Amos. His successor had a further revelation to which Amos had been blind.

(ii) *Hosea*, 736 B.C. Amos has been called the Prophet of Justice, and his religious message, though lifted immeasurably above the ideas of his fellow-Israelites, is not, perhaps, very far removed from a conception of Deity that some of the Greeks arrived at quite independently two centuries later;—Aeschylus, for example, whose tragedies display Divine Vengeance using human instruments to stalk down and punish sin. Hosea, however, has a message for which Greek literature offers no parallel: he is the Prophet of Love.

"God is Love." The phrase is as familiar, one might almost say as hackneyed as any phrase can be. Almost equally hackneyed, perhaps, are such words as "Evolution" or "Survival of the Fittest." Anyone of moderate intelligence can understand them: any fool can, without understanding them, use them. Yet we recognise that the men who worked out and verified the theories implied in the words "Evolution" and "Survival of the Fittest" were among the mightiest of scientific discoverers. Even so, but on a higher plane, the man who first said "God is Love" was among the greatest of religious geniuses. That man was Hosea.

Hosea compares the relationship of God and Man with that of marriage.[1] The husband (God) has taken to himself a wife of humble birth: she proves unworthy and forsakes

[1] Our Lord adopted the same metaphor in speaking of Himself as 'the bridegroom.'

him, and he is almost of a mind to let her go to ruin her own way. But he cannot, for all his injuries. Was she not his wife? Did she not at one time love him? Would it not be possible to wake the better self of the woman again? Such love could not fail in the end, surely, to evoke genuine love in return. So he takes her back into his house. He cannot reinstate her at once in the position of a true wife; she must pass first through a period of severe trial: if she stands the test, if she understands, appreciates, yields, then he will wed her afresh in love and trust, and nothing again shall rend asunder this new covenant.

Amos had foretold the Captivity: Hosea sees beyond the Captivity to the Return. The God of Amos punishes in a spirit of anger, almost a spirit of vengeance. The God of Hosea punishes only to purify, to save. There is to be a glorious future. The Golden Age is not behind us as the pagans fancied, and the Israelites too in their legend of the Garden of Eden, but ahead. The idea of a Messiah is already dimly suggested.

Fifteen years later, the Northern Kingdom terminated its existence in a welter of bloodshed and treachery. Sargon, the great king of Assyria, transported his captives and scattered them over his empire. Prophecy on the new and higher scale had only been at work for forty years since Amos, and the plant of prophetic religion, if it had taken root at all, was not strong enough to survive the political earthquake. Israel vanished, and the history of the prophets shifts to the smaller but less distracted Kingdom of Judah.

(iii) *Isaiah*, 736-700. Amos and Hosea were humbly born and, as we should say, 'private individuals,' who for a brief period raised their voice in passionate and disregarded protest. Isaiah, on the other hand, was born to power, and for more than thirty years he was the leading statesman of his country, first 'in opposition' and then 'in office.' The short books of *Amos* and *Hosea* are, as it were, single sermons

on a single theme. The long Book of *Isaiah*,[1] on the other hand, might be compared to a collection of the public speeches of a great statesman, ranging over nearly forty years, and dealing from a religious standpoint with a variety of national issues. During the first half of his prophetic career, covering the reign of the feeble and vacillating Ahaz, Isaiah was more feared than trusted by the government, but in the latter part he is the chosen councillor of King Hezekiah. It is impossible to over-estimate the effect this fact must have had upon the fortunes of the prophetic cause. For the time being the faith of the despised ' cranks,' Amos and Hosea, had become official orthodoxy. Once the new prophetical party had ' captured the government ' they could never thereafter be despised or ignored, however much they might be hated, by their enemies.

Isaiah's career was very largely concerned with foreign policy. The Assyrian Empire (capital, Nineveh) was now at its high-water mark. King Ahaz trembled to behold the annexation first of Damascus, then of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), and, as the only means of escape, placed himself and his kingdom voluntarily under the protection of the Assyrian king. Such a step was very naturally offensive to sturdy patriots, and during the next twenty years there was a constant pressure on the government to stake all for freedom, and organise rebellion in alliance with Egypt. This movement Isaiah opposed, much as Our Lord by His ' Render unto Caesar ' discouraged rebellion against the omnipotent Roman Empire.

An ' unpatriotic ' policy, no doubt, and closely connected with the new religious teaching which saw in God not a partisan champion of ' my country, right or wrong,' but the Ruler of the whole world, working for the salvation of the whole world, using, it is true, Israel as His special instrument,

[1] Chapters i.-xxxix. Chapters xl.-lxvi. are not the work of Isaiah (see section on Deutero-Isaiah, p. 46). Chapters xiii.-xiv., xxiv.-xxvii., xxxiv. and xxxv. are generally attributed to yet a third prophet.

but not neglecting such other instruments as fell to His hand, such as the Kingdom of Assyria. "Ho, Assyrian, rod of mine anger"[1] Isaiah makes Jehovah say. According to Isaiah, Assyria's triumphs could only have been accomplished through God's will, and he therefore drew the conclusion that God had still need of Assyria, and had greater things in store for her. To rise against the Assyrian was rebellion against the will of God, and so Isaiah did all in his power to keep Judah quiet, to discourage foolish enterprises, and, in particular, alliances with 'the broken reed' of Egypt.

It is easy to imagine Isaiah's critics retorting:—"Yes, but suppose your Assyrian decides to come and crush Jerusalem, as under this new King Sennacherib seems not unlikely: what of God's purposes then?" Isaiah himself supplied the answer when the occasion arose. So long as Assyria was content to leave Judah in the position of what we should call to-day a self-governing protectorate, Isaiah's policy was expressed in the words, "in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength";[2] but when, in 701, Sennacherib decided to destroy Jerusalem, Isaiah changed his tone completely. It might be God's will that Judah should lose her political independence: it was emphatically not God's will that the Holy City and its religious life should be destroyed. The pacifist turned patriot in a moment, and without a trace of inconsistency. He became the life and soul of the defence of Jerusalem, and boldly foretold its triumph. "The virgin daughter of Zion shall laugh thee to scorn" was the answer little Jerusalem might make to the threats of great Assyria.

Isaiah's policy was astoundingly justified. Sennacherib came up to destroy in the year 701, "and the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed."[3]

[1] Isaiah x. 5. [2] xxx. 15. [3] xxxvii. 36, 37.

The sudden destruction of Sennacherib's army by an outbreak of plague is an established fact, recorded by the Greek historian Herodotus (Book ii. ch. 141), who drew his materials from Persian sources.

This must have been Isaiah's greatest popular triumph, and apparently it was practically the end of his long career. Never before and perhaps never again would the prophetical movement stand so high in the esteem of the masses. Yet the permanent and religious results of his triumph were not altogether good. Isaiah had proclaimed that God would deliver Jerusalem because, in fact, Jerusalem was worthy to be delivered. But before long national vanity read into Isaiah's message a meaning he can never have intended. The tradition arose that Isaiah had proclaimed that Jerusalem was eternally inviolable, and that no enemy should ever prevail against the 'Holy City.' But it is not bricks and mortar, but men, that make a city—much more a 'Holy City.' The inviolability of Jerusalem depended on moral and religious conditions. If these conditions were ignored God's purposes might be fulfilled not by the survival of Jerusalem but by its destruction.

Perhaps the most splendid passages in Isaiah are those in which he expands Hosea's forecast of a 'Return' following Captivity. Where Hosea, the visionary idealist, depicts a Golden Age in which 'politics' would be an incongruity, Isaiah, ever a statesman, says that the remnant who return shall form a new kingdom under the rule of the House of David, which still held sway in Judah and in the person of Hezekiah patronised the prophetical party. Of this line an Ideal Prince shall be born, who will rule in peace and justice. He shall be a child in innocence, a God in might, and He shall be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'[1] In another passage we have a wonderful vision in which the Conversion of Man finds its echo in the Conversion of Nature, no longer

[1] Isaiah ix. 6.

'red in tooth and claw.'[1] "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."[2] And yet—strange and baffling incongruity—only eight verses further on we read that Judah and Ephraim, now combined, "shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west; together shall they spoil the children of the east: they shall put forth their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue (delta) of the Egyptian sea," etc. Absurd, no doubt: but for many highly respectable people to-day there is just the same inconsistency between the formulae in which they express their religion and the formulae in which they express their politics.[3]

(iv) *Deuteronomy*, 621 B.C. Isaiah's ascendancy over Judah was brilliant but insecure. He disappears from history immediately after the discomfiture of Sennacherib. His principles continued to rule till the death of his royal disciple Hezekiah in 687. Then came the crash. Under Manasseh the prophetical party was driven from power and subjected to bitter persecution.

It is easy enough to understand this. Nowhere has conservatism a stronger hold than in the sphere of religion. This is very natural, for the basis of such conservatism is the belief that religion, unlike science or art or politics, has been revealed from above. Shall man tamper with the divine? Such an attitude overlooks, as it seems, two all-important considerations. Firstly, is it not possible that God's original gift has been ill-preserved, that the 'revelation,' whatever

[1] Tennyson (*not* a quotation from Isaiah). [2] Isaiah xi. 6.

[3] It is quite possible that one or other of these passages is not the work of Isaiah, but is inserted by a later editor. In that case the charge of failure to apply his religious principles when his own political passions are concerned must fall not on Isaiah but on the editor of his Book.

it may have been, passed down through centuries of human tradition, has been corrupted out of all recognition, nothing remaining of it but its name? Secondly, does not the very fact on which the 'conservatives' base their case, that God once made a revelation, suggest the likelihood that He will do so again? The original vehicle of revelation, Moses himself or whom you will, was a reformer in his day: is it not possible that the reformers of a later day, even though they go beyond his teaching, may be more truly his disciples than those who, entrenching themselves behind Moses' name, call the reformers blasphemers?

Isaiah and Hezekiah had done much that might provoke the grief and anger of worthy but uninspired people. Isaiah had told them to cast away their useless idols of silver and gold "to the moles and to the bats," [1] and Hezekiah had followed out his instructions, breaking in pieces, for example, the famous brazen serpent which tradition regarded as a holy relic of the times of Moses, and connected with a legend telling how, by its means, Moses had stayed a plague of serpents. After Hezekiah's death (687) we have a long period of half a century, covering the reigns of Manasseh, Amon, and perhaps the minority of Josiah, when prophecy was crushed and sheer heathenism reigned, accompanied by the horrors of human sacrifice and public ritual immorality.

The end of this dismal period is closely connected with a very curious incident occurring in the year 621, when Josiah was twenty-six years old.[2] In the course, apparently, of some building repairs in the Temple a "book of the law of the Lord" was found. The book was brought and read to King Josiah, who when he heard it rent his clothes; "for," said he, "great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book." The king then gathered together "all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small

[1] Isaiah ii. 20. [2] II. Kings xxii. xxiii.

and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, . . . and all the people stood to the covenant." Then followed a thorough purgation of all the places of worship: idolatrous priests were expelled, and all the emblems of heathen worship cast forth into Hinnom, the unsavoury rubbish-heap always to be found on the outskirts of a town where scientific sanitation is unknown. "And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant. Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah." [1]

What was this 'book of the law'? One of the earliest and most fruitful of the now undisputed discoveries of modern Biblical Criticism [2] has been the identification of this book with Deuteronomy. The word Deuteronomy means 'Second Law,' and is due to the fact that the book purports to be a series of discourses delivered by Moses, not from Sinai (the 'First Law') but from the slope of the mountain which, at the conclusion of the discourses, he ascended to meet his death. The book was written, it would appear, by surviving members of the prophetical party and perhaps priests of the Temple—sometime during the two generations preceding its discovery. Some suppose that it dates from Hezekiah's reign and had already been the law of his reforming movement. Others suppose that it was compiled during the persecution under Manasseh and laid by until a favourable opportunity should come for revolt. This much at least is plain. The writer or writers are earnest disciples of the prophetical movement, but at the same time they

[1] II. Kings xxiii. 21, 22. [2] By De Wette in 1805.

wish to provide a formal religious constitution within which the spirit of that movement could find adequate expression.

This translating of Ideas into Institutions is the hardest of human undertakings. So much of the living water of the Idea seems to be spilt in the process of pouring it into the earthen vessel of an institution. The nobler the ideal, the harder the task and the more inadequate the performance. The extreme example is, of course, the contrast between the Christian Ideal and the actual organisation of the Churches, which has led the satirist to say, " Christianity has not failed, for it has never yet been tried." But in the political sphere one can trace the same contrasts. What a long step from the soaring idealism of the American Declaration of Independence to the mechanical contrivances of the American Constitution ! Yet the men who made the Constitution, Washington and Hamilton, were greater men than Jefferson, the fluent enthusiast who penned the Declaration. Again, what a long step from the idealism of the nobler sort of Socialism to any actual experiment in socialistic rule yet made !

Deuteronomy provided, or sought to provide, a vessel to hold the religious outpourings of the school of Isaiah. In one respect it was astonishingly successful. Deuteronomy laid the foundations of Judaism in solid rock, and the edifice still stands after all these centuries. Yet that institution, the Jewish Church, is clearly seen, as we follow its history through the succeeding centuries down to the time when it crucified Christ, to have failed to capture and to express the living spirit of the prophetic message.

The whole history of Israel had, so far, been that of a people with an exceptional mission, and exceptional responsibility, distracted from its purpose by ' the things of the world '—whether agriculture and its Baalim worship, or commerce and foreign alliance and the consequent introduction of foreign worships. The prophets had taught that God

is a spirit. Deuteronomy demanded, in Puritan style,[1] the destruction of all figurative representation of the deity. Isaiah was believed to have taught the inviolable sanctity of Jerusalem. Deuteronomy, seizing on this perversion of his teaching, and desiring above all things to succeed in the hitherto almost impossible task of 'policing' religion in the interests of purity, ordained that all worship should be centred in Jerusalem and all other sanctuaries and places of worship outside it destroyed. God was thus withdrawn from Man, who had so long misunderstood Him, and safely locked up in a Temple of which the priests had the key. For the country-people religious worship is reduced to the three great annual festivals, originally, as already mentioned, agricultural and borrowed from the Canaanites, but now elevated and linked up historically with the life of Moses; the festivals of beginning and end of wheat harvest being connected with the Exodus (Passover) and the Giving of the Law at Sinai (Pentecost), and the Grape Festival with the Journey through the Wilderness (Feast of Tabernacles).[2]

It is easy to condemn Deuteronomy as unworthy of the spirit of the prophets. It remains, however, one of the astonishing *practical* successes of history. It founded as orthodoxy what had been religious rebellion. It founded the canon of the Old Testament, of which it was the first officially recognised 'Sacred Book.' Nor should we forget that when Our Lord wished to sum up the spirit of the Ten Commandments as transformed by Christianity, Deuteronomy and its successor Leviticus, supplied Him with words He needed: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, with all thy strength;[3] and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[4]

[1] *Historically*, of course, it was the Puritans who, coming later, demanded this in 'deuteronomic style.'

[2] The first and second are for Christians Easter and Whitsunday. The third corresponds to nothing in the Christian Year, but by the Jews is still celebrated shortly after the Day of Atonement.

[3] Deuteronomy vi. 5. [4] Leviticus xix. 18.

(v) *Jeremiah*, 630-586. Thirteen years after the publication of Deuteronomy, Josiah was defeated and killed in battle against Egypt (608). His successors, worthless and foolish princes, were soon embroiled with the great Babylonian Empire, which after the destruction of Nineveh by the Medes in 606 had superseded the empire of Assyria in Mesopotamia.[1] In 586 Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, besieged and captured Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, blinded the last king, Zedekiah, and carried him and the bulk of his people away into captivity.

Jeremiah upheld the cause of prophecy throughout this period. What others had foretold it was his harder task to experience and interpret. The old popular religion of a 'patriotic' Jehovah was buried for ever under the ruins of Solomon's Temple. The disciples of Isaiah were put to confusion by the falsification of what they supposed to be his most popular doctrine, the inviolability of the Holy City. The disciples of Deuteronomy were confounded by the destruction of their single sanctuary, the removal of the keystone of their arch. All the external and material supports of the faith were cut away. It was Jeremiah's sublime yet heartrending vocation to preach acquiescence in the loss of all that was so loved yet unessential, and to point to what remained as the essential of true religion.

Most modern writers who have studied the prophets deeply seem to agree that Jeremiah was the greatest of them all—greatest, perhaps, because his task was the hardest, and he proved not unequal to it. Yet he was hated and persecuted and jeered at as was no other prophet in his life-time, and his name, even to-day, is unpopular. He alone of the prophets has bequeathed a slang-word to our language: a 'jeremiad' is an utterance of barren discontent, of nerveless pessimism. It was natural enough. He lived in a time of desperate

[1] Nineveh was on the E. bank of the Tigris, opposite the modern Mosul; Babylon, on the Euphrates, fifty miles south of the modern Baghdad.

warfare for bare existence, and he was a ' defeatist,' preaching the uselessness of resistance, the inevitability of defeat, the necessity of acquiescence in national extinction. As he offended the patriots, so he equally offended the religious. He must have seen to the heart of the weakness underlying the reforms of the Deuteronomists. To Jeremiah God was a Spirit to be worshipped in the Spirit, and between the sober formalities of the reformed worship and the barbarous rites of the old there was for him only a difference of degree.

It is Jeremiah who first seizes in its full significance that aspect of religion which is to us, through the teaching of Christ, the highest, one might almost say the only, aspect. " The longing for God is inborn in man ; he has only to follow after that yearning of his heart as the animal after its instinct, and this craving must lead him to God . . . But if religion, or, as Jeremiah calls it, the knowledge of God, is born in man, then there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles . . . The ideal character and the universality of religion—these are the two new grand apprehensions that Jeremiah has given to the world. Every man as such is born a child of God. He does not become such through the forms of any particular sect or outward organisation, but he becomes such in his heart. A pure heart and a pure mind are all that God requires of man, let his piety choose what form it will so long as it is genuine." [1]

A life of lonely heroism is more inspiring than any teaching, and such a life Jeremiah lived. By temperament he must have been a gentle, sensitive, ' thin-skinned ' man. He was not endowed by nature with the fiery force of Elijah, or the iron steadfastness of Isaiah. He often sickened and quailed before his task, but he went through with it, enduring

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 98. Some good authorities, *e.g.* Hamilton already quoted, regard this passage from Cornill as attributing to Jeremiah more ' modern ' notions than he was capable of. Yet we have this negative evidence in his favour that Jeremiah alone of the prophets is entirely free from passages which imply a permanent and inevitable distinction between Jew and Gentile

imprisonment, risking life, and at last inspiring a kind of awe even in the minds of his enemies. The end is characteristic. After the Captivity he was left behind with the remnant, over whom Nebuchadnezzar appointed one Gedaliah as governor. Almost immediately Gedaliah was murdered by a band of desperate patriots, who then fled to Egypt, strangely enough carrying off the hated ' pacifist ' prophet with them. In Egypt, so tradition tells, he still refused to preach what his audience required of him, and was stoned to death.

It may have been with Jeremiah in mind that the author of the later chapters of Isaiah (see section vii of this chapter) wrote what has become the most familiar passage in the whole range of prophecy.

" He was despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." [1]

One point in the above account deserves a little more consideration. Jeremiah, it seems, looked coldly on the Deuteronomists. Yet were not the Deuteronomists in the main on the right lines ? Did they not achieve the one thing needful at the moment, the building of a solid bridge of *law*, by which the true believer could cross the yawning gulf of Captivity ? Yes, certainly. But was not Jeremiah a prophet of unequalled inspiration ? Once again,—Yes, certainly.

The true tragedy of history, it has been remarked, is not the conflict of right with wrong, but the conflict of right with right. In Deuteronomy and Jeremiah we have the two types, both necessary to the preservation and progress of religion ; and yet, so opposed in outlook and method, that they can never act whole-heartedly in concert. The Deuteronomists are the statesmen and lawgivers of religion.

[1] Isaiah liii. 3-5.

They build our churches, and draft our creeds, and organise the Divine Society. But for them religion would withdraw from common life and become the heritage of the religious genius alone—the man who needs no human aid to bring him into communion with God. But Jeremiah and his like are the artists and poets of religion. It is they through whom God speaks to man. But for them our churches would enshrine idols, and our creeds hypocrisy and humbug, and our Divine Society become a conspiracy of prigs. Of course, the organisation of the Deuteronomists in every age is inadequate to express the vision of the prophet. That is always the way when ideas come to be translated into institutions. "Ah, but," says Browning,

> "a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?"

(vi) *Ezekiel* (592-570). The scene now shifts to 'the waters of Babylon,' and prophecy enters on a new task in a new atmosphere. The blow of Captivity has fallen: it now remains to secure the preservation of "the remnant" and their Return. The whole purpose of the conqueror in putting himself to the trouble and expense of transplanting his defeated enemies is to blot out their sense of national individuality. Assyria had succeeded with the Northern Kingdom: the "Lost Ten Tribes" have disappeared and left no trace. It was the special purpose of Ezekiel to defeat the similar purpose of Nebuchadnezzar for the captives of Judah.

Ezekiel is practical and statesmanlike, of the type of Isaiah rather than of Jeremiah, but he had thoroughly grasped Jeremiah's leading idea, the prime concern of religion with the soul of the individual, and he went on to deduce from this the primary duty of the priest. Hitherto the priest had figured in history as a keeper of holy places. Ezekiel points to his mission as a guardian of holy lives. He is, so far as we can tell, the author of the great metaphor of the Good Shepherd, and thus the inspirer of the Twenty-third Psalm

and of the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. "Thus saith the Lord God," he writes; "Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the sheep? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill the fatlings; but ye feed not the sheep. . . For thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I myself even I, will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep." [1] And again: "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest not him warning to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." [2]

Jeremiah's conception of religion had been wholly personal, a communion between the individual soul and God. Thus he marks the extreme point of reaction from the purely social, patriotic, non-moral religion of the populace. Ezekiel works back towards the re-introduction of the social element on a higher plane. The individual soul can only flourish in a favourable environment: that environment a purified priesthood, a purified ceremonial, must provide. He was, of course, faced with the urgent practical problem of organising religious life during the Exile in such a way as to hold the community together. The Temple was gone, and there was no thought of building a new one in a strange and unholy land.[3] So Ezekiel turns to the institution of the Sabbath and makes it the keynote of the religious life of the Exiles. Regularly once a week, at any rate, the Exiles should realise themselves as the holy people of God. The durability of his teaching on this subject hardly needs pointing out. With the same purpose in view he insisted with a fresh emphasis on the importance of racial purity, and the depth of degrada-

[1] Ezekiel xxxiv. 2, 3, 11, 12. [2] iii. 18.

[3] The Jews resident in Egypt had a Temple at this period, but the complete silence of the Bible on the subject probably indicates that the Jews of Judaea strongly disapproved.

tion involved in marriage with the foreigners amidst whom the Exiles lived. Here, again, is one of the marks of the New Testament Jew, with his contempt for the Samaritan and the Gentile, and his sense of hereditary privilege passed on from generation to generation by the physical rite of circumcision.

The curious thing about Ezekiel is the way in which, while grasping the great idea of Jeremiah, he yet, owing to the 'practical' turn of his mind and still more, perhaps, to the necessities of his situation, works round to a conclusion almost identical with that of the Deuteronomists. Like nearly all the other prophets, he has left us his vision of the ideal future, his Messianic forecast, his picture of 'the New Jerusalem.' But it is a far cry from the poetic visions of Hosea and Isaiah to the precise and carefully calculated forecasts of Ezekiel. "The service and worship of God are marked out most exactly, and the re-built Temple becomes, not only spiritually but materially, the centre of the whole life of the nation. The priests and Levites receive a definite portion of land as the material foundation of their existence . . . Should crime or transgression occur, it must be atoned for by an ecclesiastical penance."[1] For the Church and the State are one, or rather the Church has swallowed up the State. A 'Prince' is described who will be the supreme head of the people, but his main function is that of High Priest. "He has to look after the Temple, and supply the materials for worship, for which purpose he can only collect from the people gifts of such things as are needful for sacrifice: sheep, goats, bullocks, oxen, corn, wine, oil. All taxes are exclusively Church taxes."[2]

A remarkable forecast, for in its essentials it was fulfilled, even though the fulfilment was a parody of the original as Ezekiel conceived it. Ezekiel's 'New Jerusalem' sketches the Jerusalem of the Gospels, the Jerusalem that crucified

[1] Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 122.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 123.

Christ. Ezekiel is a man with two voices; the vigorous outbursts of the prophet are giving place to the smooth intonations of the priest.

(vii) *Deutero-Isaiah* (550-537). The name of the author of the last half of the book of Isaiah [1] is unknown, and he is variously described as Deutero-Isaiah, the Second Isaiah, the Great Unknown, or the Prophet of the Return. He is the greatest artist, the greatest poet among the prophets, and his finest passages [2] are more familiar than anything else in prophetic literature. They are frequently quoted in the New Testament, and have furnished the words for some of the noblest solos and choruses of Handel's "Messiah."

The Babylonian empire did not long survive after the death of its great founder, Nebuchadnezzar (604-561). The Persians under Cyrus shook off the yoke of the Medes, conquered Asia Minor, overthrowing King Croesus of Lydia, advanced down the Mesopotamian valley and entered Babylon in 538.[3] The conqueror at once gave the Jewish exiles permission to return to their country, no doubt because he was glad thereby to secure the establishment of a friendly community, under his protection, on the borders of Egypt.

These events inspire the prophet to open on his topmost note of exultation. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare (or trial) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made

[1] Chapters xl.-lxvi. (though some think that lvi.-lxvi. is by a later writer).

[2] Particularly chs. xl. liii. lv. lxiii.

[3] The Persian Empire lasted just over two hundred years, failed to conquer Greece in 490 and 480, and was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332.

low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain ; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed . . . O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain ; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God ! Behold, the Lord God will come as a mighty one, and his arm shall rule for him : behold his reward is with him and his recompense before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs in his arm, and shall carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that give suck." [1]

Cyrus is recognised as God's instrument of mercy just as Isaiah had recognised Assyria as God's instrument of chastisement. For is not God the ruler of all the earth ? God's might and majesty are vividly portrayed—" Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." [2] In contrast with such a God, the idols of heathen worship are derided with overwhelming scorn. " The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold. He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot ; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to set up a graven image that shall not be moved . . . He burneth part thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he eateth flesh ; he roasteth roast and is satisfied : yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire : and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image : he falleth down unto it and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me ; for thou art my god." [3]

But if the God of all the world has become the God of Israel, that can only be as a temporary measure. Israel is not the end of God's work, but the beginning, the means

[1] Isaiah xl. 1-11. [2] xl. 12. [3] xl. 19, 20 ; xliv. 16, 17

whereby the whole world shall learn the truth. Here, first, we have the conception of a missionary Church. "Go ye into all lands and preach," says Our Lord. Cyrus is God's Servant for the sake of Israel: but so also is Israel God's Servant for the sake of all the world—God's Suffering Servant.

We have already quoted from the famous fifty-third chapter "He was despised and rejected of men . . . and with his stripes we are healed." It is natural to think that that splendid tribute was inspired by the memory of Jeremiah: but its more particular reference is not to Jeremiah, but to Israel herself. The Chosen People were chosen to suffer, and through their sufferings true religion was to come to all the world. It is magnificent poetry, and has not the last two thousand years proved it a true interpretation of history also?

CHAPTER IV

THE JEWISH CHURCH OF THE RESTORATION

B.C. 537-A.D. 70

THE purpose of this chapter is to bridge the gulf between two great periods of religious inspiration, the period of the great prophets and the period of Christ and His apostles. We have to describe the Restoration of the Remnant, so confidently predicted by the prophets, and the type of religious life developed within the restored church during the six hundred years of its existence.

The period is contemporary with the most brilliant and familiar epochs of Greek and Roman history. It opens with Peisistratus, the enlightened tyrant, ruling in Athens, and the Tarquins still seated on their throne in Rome. Both tyrannies fall, almost simultaneously, shortly before the year 500. Athens rapidly develops to the zenith of her immortal splendour and Pericles (460-430) is the contemporary of Ezra, the greatest of the Fathers of the Jewish Church. The freedom of Athens, and her greatness also, are over before 330, and the Macedonian Alexander the Great, after conquering Greece, conquered Egypt, Judaea, Persia, and many lands beyond them. Henceforth Judaea is within the sphere of Greek influences, for Alexander's empire over the eastern Mediterranean survived in three great fragments, Judaea lying between two of them, Egypt under the Greek Ptolemies[1] and Syria under the Antiochi,[2] just as in former days it had

[1] Of whom the famous Cleopatra was one of the last.

[2] After whom Antioch was named.

lain between Egypt of the Pharaohs and Assyria. One of these Greek kings of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, set himself in 165 B.C. to extinguish the Jewish state and church, but failed against the heroic defence of the Maccabees. Meanwhile, the stubborn and practical Roman was developing much more slowly. Only after the decisive defeat of the Carthaginian Hannibal (202 B.C.) did Rome begin to interfere actively in the affairs of the eastern Mediterranean. The annexation of Greece to the Roman Empire may be roughly dated 150 B.C. The first appearance of the Roman in Judaea is the arrival of Pompey in 63. Henceforth Judaea is within the Roman sphere of influence, but Roman policy preferred for a time to entrust it to an Edomite chieftain, who enjoyed an independence conditional on his efficiency and his friendliness to Rome. This Edomite was Herod the Great, whose reign ended about the year Our Lord was born. His relationship to the Roman Empire resembled that of the Amir of Afghanistan to our Indian Empire to-day. His descendants, however, lacked his ability and were shorn by Rome of most of the authority he had enjoyed. At the time of Our Lord's crucifixion, a very feeble creature called Herod Antipas is ruling in Galilee, but Judaea is under a petty Roman official, Pontius Pilate, both alike being under the control of the Roman governor of Syria. In 70 A.D. Vespasian, a very able and vigorous emperor, who had just ascended the throne and put an end to the chaos occasioned by the crimes and the downfall of Nero, sent his son to destroy the obstinately quarrelsome little community of Judaea. With this event the history of the Jewish state ends, having overlapped by about forty years the beginnings of Christianity.

Such is the outline of political events. In this book we are concerned with politics only in so far as they contribute to the understanding of religious history. The religious history of the period must be considered under two headings:

(i) The character of the Jewish Church and the evolution of the parties that figure in the New Testament, Priests and Scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees.

(ii) The growth of the idea of a 'Messiah.'

(i) *The character of the Jewish Church.* In 537, the year after the entry of Cyrus into Babylon, about fifty thousand Jews of all classes,[1] set out for Judaea with a Persian convoy. Their leader was Zerubbabel, a member of the old royal family. An altar was at once erected on the site where Solomon's Temple had stood, and no doubt religious organisation on the lines sketched by Ezekiel was carried as far as the difficulties and poverty of the community would admit. Seventeen years passed before, under the encouragement of two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, the rebuilding of the Temple was attempted. At this point the Samaritans, the mixed population dwelling in what had once been the country of Ahab and Elijah, of Amos and Hosea, offered their assistance, but were contemptuously repulsed. Here again we see the influence of Ezekiel and the spirit of the New Testament Pharisee. Labouring on unaided, the Jews completed their temple in five years.

Nearly a century elapsed between the 'Return' under Zerubbabel (537) and the achievements by which Ezra and Nehemiah, as will be shown, restored the self-confidence and self-respect of the Jewish community. This hundred years leaves hardly any obvious traces in the Bible record and it is easy to imagine what a depressing period it must have been. What had become of all the magnificent promises of the prophets? Had they not, 'like the baseless fabric of a vision,' dissolved and left 'not a wrack behind?' Were they not proved to be 'such stuff as dreams are made on?' The restoration of the House of David, if ever seriously

[1] What *proportion* of the total number of exiles returned is much disputed, as also what proportion of the inhabitants of Judaea was carried into captivity fifty years before. It may be taken as certain that in both cases a considerable body remained behind.

expected, proved an idle dream. The wretched poverty-stricken community, pensioners dependent on a contemptuous Persia to protect them from the neighbours whose hatred their exclusiveness provoked, might well have despaired. Was it not ridiculous to pretend that Jehovah was God of all the earth when His new Temple was but a miserable parody of that built by Solomon for a merely tribal deity?

The pathos of this position is one of the main motives of the Psalmists. 'God has delivered them, and yet—*has* he delivered them?' Psalm 126 opens:

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like unto them that dream.

"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing;

"Then said they among the nations, The Lord hath done great things for them."

But two verses later it is as though this deliverance had never been. The Psalmist prays,

"Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the South."

The unnamed prophet who called himself Malachi (the Messenger) belongs to the period, two generations after the building of the Temple (450), and depicts the despondency around him. "Ye have said," he writes, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord Zebaoth. And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are built up."[1] Everyone who ever goes to Church knows that the psalms are full of this complaint that the wicked prosper and the good suffer. Some psalmists seem to succeed in persuading themselves that this is really an illusion, and that the prosperity of the wicked is but a passing phase. But neither of the individual nor of the nation could it honestly be said that God's rewards and

[1] Malachi iii. 14, 15.

punishments, if measured in terms of material prosperity and adversity, were proportionate to deserts.

An adequate answer to such doubts and fears was not to be had before the coming of Christ. Malachi, however, has an answer of his own, and its very inadequacy is a sign of what was to follow. The reason, says Malachi, why the Jews suffer is that their ritual is imperfectly performed. "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father where is my honour? and if I be a master where is my fear? . . . Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar . . . ye have brought the blind, the lame, and the sick: thus ye bring the offering: should I accept this of your hand?" [1]

Thus the well-meaning Malachi. It is a far cry from this to Amos, three hundred years earlier: "I hate, I despise your feast days: . . . but let judgment flow down as the waters and righteousness as a mighty stream." [2] When the prophet has become the ally of the priest, the work of prophecy is over.

The two men, Ezra and Nehemiah, who turned this despondent community into a vigorous Church, proceeded on Malachi's lines. During the eighty years since Zerubbabel had left Babylon, the Jews left behind had been carrying on the work of Ezekiel, and had elaborated that astonishing body of ritual which figures in our Bibles as the last half of Exodus, all Leviticus, and most of Numbers. Armed with this 'new Deuteronomy' as one might call it, Ezra and Nehemiah proceeded to Jerusalem with, we are told, seventeen hundred followers. We know little of the details of their struggle with the 'ungodly' beyond the fact that they won a complete victory. "In October, 444, a great gathering of the people was held. Here the nation bound itself by oath to Ezra's book of the law as it had bound itself to Josiah's 177 years before. Many a hard and bitter struggle was to be fought, but Ezra and Nehemiah carried their

[1] Malachi i. 6, 7, 13. [2] Amos v. 21-24.

cause through and broke down all opposition. Those who could not adapt themselves to the new condition of affairs left the country to escape in foreign lands the compulsion of the law." [1]

In keeping the law down to its minutest particular the Jews believed themselves to be holding the fortress of religious truth for Jehovah, until such time as it seemed good to Him to relieve the beleaguered garrison and inaugurate the great triumph which the disappointments consequent on the return from captivity had merely postponed. The nature of the triumph expected, the history of the Messianic hope, is dealt with in the second part of this chapter.

The characteristic institutions and parties of Judaism, familiar to us through the gospels, originated fairly early in the history of the restored Church. Ezekiel had foretold the rule of a prince of the house of David, who should be the chief officer of the Temple. His forecast proved wrong in the letter only. As early as 520 B.C. we find mention of a High Priest, of the house not of David, but of Zadok, the priest of Solomon's Temple, and member of the old Levitical tribe. The high priestly office became hereditary, and the high priest, being treated by the Persian monarchy as the head of the community, developed into a secular ruler; or rather, Church and State became identical. The priests grew wealthy on the proceeds of the elaborate system of religious taxation ordained by the law, and developed into a thoroughly worldly aristocracy, the Sadducees (=Zadokites) of the New Testament. Finally, 153 B.C., Jonathan the Cunning, younger brother and successor of Judas Maccabaeus, a highly successful soldier and diplomatist, assumed the High Priesthood himself on the suggestion of a pretender to the throne of Syria with whom he was acting in alliance. After the extinction of the Maccabaean line in the time of Herod the Great, the office was held by mere creatures of the Herodian or Roman party. Hence the virtual identity of Sadducees

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 161.

and Herodians. The main religious significance of the Sadducees is that they remained indifferent or hostile to the Messianic movement hereafter to be described.

Side by side with the High Priesthood, but of later (and, indeed, uncertain) origin, developed the Council of the Sanhedrin.[1] The politics of this body varied according as the Sadducees or the Pharisees predominated in it.

The main current of religious life flowed not from the Temple but from the Law. For the preaching and exposition of the law synagogues, or as we should say, churches, were built in every village of Judaea,[2] and a body of teachers and commentators of the law developed, and are known as the Scribes or Rabbis. At first the Scribes may have been mainly priests, *i.e.* members of the hereditary Levite caste, but with the growing indifference of the priests, the work devolved on a body of lay teachers, or rabbis. The necessity for professional exposition of the law was increased by the fact that Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures, rapidly ceased to be a living language, being superseded by Aramaic, the prevailing language of the western provinces of the Persian empire. Thus the Hebrew Bible was for the uneducated man in Our Lord's day as unintelligible as the Latin Bible to the uneducated man of the Middle Ages.

[1] The word Sanhedrin or Sanhedrim is the Hebrew spelling of the Greek word Sunedrion, meaning Assembly. It is apparently alluded to in II. Chronicles xix. 8. "Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehosaphat set of the Levites and of the priests and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the Lord, and for controversies." The writer of Chronicles is describing an institution of his own day, and, after his manner (see page 11) attributing its foundation, wrongly, to the period before the Captivity.

[2] The establishment of synagogues got rid of that complete centralisation of all religious worship in Jerusalem which had been the plan of the Deuteronomists. Yet the parallel between the synagogues and our churches is in one way misleading, since the most solemn religious rites could not be celebrated in the synagogues. To imagine a modern parallel, we must suppose our churches as existing only for matins and evensong, and Holy Communion as being celebrated only in Westminster Abbey at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

A little more than a hundred years after Ezra came the campaigns of Alexander the Great, sowing all over the Near East the seeds of Greek culture, Greek art, and Greek philosophy. Here was a new and subtler temptation for the chosen people. Just as before the Captivity, ordinary Semitic heathenism had exercised a fatal fascination and defied the efforts of the prophets, so now Hellenism, as this somewhat diluted and debased descendant of the noble culture of free Greece is called, fascinated the Jews and seemed to prove afresh the absurdity of their pretensions to be the specially chosen people of an all-powerful God. When the choice lay between the spirit of Ezra and the spirit of Plato, it might seem fairly obvious that the latter was the more enlightened choice. There were those, however, who stood for Ezra, and these were the Scribes or Rabbis. They became known as the Chasidim (Asideans), the Holy ; and later as the Perushim (Pharisees), the Separate.

How the struggle would have gone had the two principles been left to fight it out on their merits it is impossible to say, but in 165 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes, a tyrant whose enthusiasm for the spread of Greek culture resembled King Philip of Spain's enthusiasm for the Papal Church, attempted to root out Judaism by military conquest and destruction. Judas Maccabaeus sprang armed to the rescue and with him the Chasidim. Phariseeism became for a time identical with patriotism, just as Protestantism was identical with patriotism in the days of Queen Elizabeth. It was only later, when the successors of Judas turned from defence to attack, conquered the neighbouring tribes and, in alliance at times with the Romans, set about emulating the worldly splendours of Solomon, that the Pharisees again assumed their natural rôle of the party of opposition.[1] As such we see them in the New Testament. Nothing but Christ's teaching, attacking as it did both the legal system of the

[1] Much as, for a different reason, the sons of Elizabeth's sturdy Protestants became the Puritans who opposed Charles I.

Pharisees and also, so it was supposed, the temporal authority of the Romans and their priestly parasites the Sadducees, could have created a union of Pharisee and Sadducee against a common foe.

For in the course of five centuries the Scribes had turned the work of their founder Ezra into an enormous and inflated parody of its original. We have already seen how the Deuteronomists, in attempting to mould the teaching of Isaiah into a code of religious law had lost in the process most of the spirit of his teaching. As Deuteronomy stood to Isaiah, so Ezra's Leviticus stood to Deuteronomy, and so stood the Traditions of the Scribes to Ezra's Leviticus. Not content with the written law-books, the Scribes had assumed, to magnify their office, that Moses had transmitted to Joshua by word of mouth a further body of rules. This had been passed down similarly from generation to generation and was now in the keeping of the Rabbis. Such are the astonishing notions of which people are capable when a scientific conception of history is unknown. It is against this vast mass of tradition that Our Lord directed his attacks, pointing out examples such as the Law of Corban, whereby a man was encouraged to neglect his plain duty to his parents in order that the priests might get hold of his money.[1]

It is easy to pile up an indictment against the Pharisees. None the less they served a useful purpose and deserve the gratitude more than the scorn of us who have opportunities of profiting by their mistakes. They stood unflinchingly for an arduous conception of duty. They misunderstood the service of God, but at least they realised that there was a God and that His service was the supreme concern. If we recognise that, in the period before Christ, God was slowly

[1] This finds a parallel in the practice of the mediaeval Church, whereby priests, holding the terrors of Hell over the makers of wills, induced them to impoverish their families and leave all their property to the Church: Edward I.'s Statute of Mortmain (De donis religiosis) was directed, not very successfully, against this practice.

working out a purpose and providing an environment in which the seed of Christianity could be sown ; if we recognise that the Chosen People were indeed chosen, that they were a kind of garrison to hold a position till the time came for them to be relieved, then we must recognise that it was the Pharisees who did not lose faith in the promise of the prophets, that it was they who held the fort. It is true that, when the Relief came, they failed to recognise the fact. But if the Pharisees crucified Christ, they also produced St. Paul. There is no excuse for being a Pharisee to-day : there was some excuse for being one in the days of Herod.

Browning has a striking poem [1] in which he imagines the persecuted Jews of the Middle Ages appealing to God to forgive them, if indeed they mistook His Messiah and crucified Him in days gone by. Let Him recognise that at least the mistake was an honest mistake, and join hands with them now against the Christian Sadducees of the corrupt Church of Rome.

God spoke, and gave us the word to keep,
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,
Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By His servant Moses the watch was set :
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

Thou ! if thou wast He, who at mid-watch came,
By the starlight, naming a dubious name !
And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash
With fear—O Thou, if that martyr-gash
Fell on Thee coming to take thine own,
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.
But, the Judgment over, join sides with us !
Thine too is the cause ! and not more thine
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed !
Who maintain Thee in word, and defy Thee in deed !

[1] Holy Cross Day.

(ii) *The Messianic Hope.* What was it that kept these Pharisees, and with them many devout Psalmists true to their faith? The answer is, the Messianic Hope.

As far back as their earliest written records go, we find that the Israelites, unlike the Greeks and Romans, pictured a Golden Age which was ahead of them, not behind them. The J narrative of Genesis, which must be a hundred years earlier than Amos, describes Jehovah as promising to Abraham descendants as numberless 'as the sands of the sea,' 'in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'[1] In the prophets this promise is recalled and emphasised again and again as the privilege of the remnant who will survive the national calamity that God is sending as a punishment for Israel's unfaithfulness. "Israel will serve Jehovah in righteousness and holiness, and Jehovah will bless Israel with the fullness of his blessing in all matters, spiritual, material and political. Material prosperity and political supremacy are but the natural accompaniments and outward manifestations of the great central feature of the Hope, the spiritual and religious blessings that will come to Israel on that day of union with Jehovah."[2] As a result of this manifestation of God's power and glory, His worship will spread all over the earth. This latter forecast appears both in nobler and in baser forms. Sometimes the Gentiles are represented as gladly accepting conversion: at other times they are represented as being exterminated. Or again, the two ideas are combined and a remnant of the Gentiles is found worthy. However, even in those passages in which the Gentiles are found worthy, they do not receive equal treatment with Israel. "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God; ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast

[1] Gen. xii. 3, and elsewhere.

[2] Hamilton, *The People of God*, vol. i. p. 192.

yourselves."[1] Jeremiah alone appears to be free from this taint of racial pride, of 'imperialism' in the worse sense of the word.

The idea of a future 'Kingdom of God,' was much clearer to the devout mind in the age of the prophets than the idea of a future 'Divine King' or Messiah. We have, it is true, Isaiah's picture of that future King as 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,'[2] but it is very doubtful if the other most famous passage which the Church has taken as a Messianic forecast ought really to be regarded as such. As has been already said, the passage in the Second Isaiah beginning, 'He was despised and rejected of men,'[3] is to be understood as referring to Israel herself, and the sufferings she had already endured. After Our Lord's crucifixion the passage was naturally adopted by the Christians as applicable to the Messiah,[4] but the idea of a 'suffering Messiah' was wholly out of keeping with all the rest of the Messianic expectations, and was indeed the prime cause of the Messiah's rejection by the faithful but mistaken Pharisees.

To trace the development of the Messianic Hope during the five and a half centuries between Deutero-Isaiah and Christ, we must turn to the literature of that period, the great

[1] Isaiah lxi. 5, 6. [2] ix. 6.

[3] liii. 3. See page 48 above.

[4] In their anxiety to convince the Jews that Christ really fulfilled the Messianic Hope, the early Christians, very naturally but we must hold mistakenly, ransacked the Scriptures which both Jew and Christian accepted to find passages which could by any means be twisted into forecasts even of the most detailed and unessential incidents in Our Lord's life. The Gospel of St. Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews, both written for Jews, are full of examples of this. One example may be quoted, from Matthew ii. 23, "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." The only passages to which this can refer are Judges xiii. 5 and I. Samuel i. 11, which describe the fact that Samson and Samuel were bound under what was called the Nazirite vow, involving abstinence from strong drink, etc. Any number of such examples might be quoted.

bulk of which lies outside the Old Testament. Some of it is found in a collection of books which is in some Christian communities included in the Bible but in Protestant Churches is given an inferior position as 'The Apocrypha,' meaning the 'hidden' books. More important for the present purpose are certain books that have never been regarded by Christians as Sacred Scriptures, notably the Book of *Enoch*, written during the two centuries preceding Our Lord's birth. These successors of the prophets are known as Apocalyptic writers. The word apocalypse means revelation, and the most familiar examples of this type of writing are the last book of the New Testament, and the second half of the Book of *Daniel*, written during the Maccabaean war. The method of apocalyptic writers differs from those of the prophets in several respects. The apocalypses are purely literary works and not, as one might say, sermons collected and printed. They are less political and moral and more purely religious: less concerned with the present and more with the future; less direct, and filled with strange metaphors under which various kingdoms or parties are, for instance, described under the names of animals; usually anonymous and ascribed, by a literary fashion which cannot have been intended to deceive, to celebrated figures of the distant past such as the mysterious holy man of the days before the Flood, Enoch, who 'walked with God, and he was not: for God took him.'[1]

These apocalyptic writers of the two centuries before Christ were gradually driven to the conclusion that the Kingdom of God foretold by the prophets was too vast a conception to be staged in this limited and imperfect world. The End of the World must first come. But previous to this, 'God would send His Messiah,' that is to say His 'Anointed one,' His Christ, to prepare men for the Last Judgment. In the Book of *Enoch* this Messiah is already

[1] Genesis v. 24.

described as Son of Man,[1] a title which implies divinity, because owing to the metaphorical scheme of the book, men are always spoken of in it under the names of animals. At the same time, however, this Divine King is expected to display the characteristics of an earthly monarch, though on a more magnificent scale. He is to be a 'Son of David,' and is to 'shatter unrighteous (*i.e.* Gentile) rulers.' We have proof of this materialistic side of the idea in the astonishing fact that at one time, when the Pharisees were in close alliance with the Maccabees, they expected a prince of that family to prove himself Messiah, and shifted their expectations from the House of David to the Tribe of Levi, to which the Maccabaean family belonged.[2]

The Reign of the Messiah was, then, to be a transitional stage on earth, ushering in the 'Kingdom' which was to follow the End of the World. This idea led the early Church to expect Christ's 'Second Coming' within the lifetime of the Apostles.

This changed conception of the Messianic Hope led directly to the evolution of the idea of a Future Life, which the Pharisees accepted and the Sadducees denied in Our Lord's time. The idea is quite foreign to the writers of the Old Testament, with the exception of the authors of the Book of Daniel and one or two Psalms, which are assigned to a very late date. The belief of Old Testament Israel on this subject was practically the same as that of the Greeks and Romans. They believed only in a vague and shadowy 'ghost-world,' the Sheol of the Hebrews, and the Hades of the Greeks, far outside God's jurisdiction. "In the grave who shall give thee thanks?"[3] says the Psalmist. Job, crying out for death to end his agonies, speaks of it as the place, 'where the wicked cease

[1] The term 'Son of Man' also occurs in Daniel vii. 13, but then it appears to mean Israel as contrasted with the 'beasts' which are the heathen empires.

[2] See, for example, Charles, *Between the Old and New Testaments* (Home University Library), pp. 78-84.

[3] Ps. vi. 5.

from troubling and the weary are at rest.'[1] The Ghost of Achilles in the Iliad tells Odysseus who is privileged, while yet alive, to visit him, that he would rather be the meanest of slaves on earth than king over all the 'perished corpses,' and such a view would be as natural to a Hebrew writer. Relationship with the 'ghosts,' which was one of the leading principles of Egyptian religion, was not regarded as impossible by the Israelites, but was condemned by their religion as wicked magic, as in the case of Saul, who deserted the true worship of Jehovah and sought the aid of the Witch of Endor, that he might communicate with Samuel.

The idea of a Kingdom of God beyond the End of the World, however, implied a life of blessedness beyond the grave for those alive on earth at the time of the Last Judgment, and it was an inevitable step from this to assume the resurrection of those already dead. The inclusion of the very late Book of *Daniel* (165-3 B.C.) in our Old Testament enables us to show one easily accessible passage where the ideas of Heaven and Hell, familiar to the Christian world, but unknown in what we call the Old Testament period, are clearly stated. It is as follows: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. . . . Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the issue of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end."[2]

If then we would understand the part played by the conception of the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, or of the Messiah or Christ, in New Testament times, we must realise

[1] Job iii. 17. [2] Daniel xii. 1-10.

that many different conceptions of these things existed side by side, that the popular mind entertained on the subject only vague and often inconsistent ideals. A great gift of God was confidently expected. Jesus proclaimed that in Himself that gift was realised.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

My aim is to make this list as short as possible, to provide a list, with brief descriptions, of a sort of 'minimum library,' which should be available to those giving Divinity lessons on the lines of this book. All the books mentioned would also be found interesting by students who desire to go further into the subject.

I have divided the list into four sections corresponding to the Parts of this book.

Part I

1. *C. H. Cornill, The Prophets of Israel* (*The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago*). A very short, clear, simple history of the prophetic movement from Moses to Daniel, on chronological lines, based on popular lectures.

2. *H. F. Hamilton, The People of God, Vol. I. Israel* (*Oxford University Press*). A more advanced and philosophic study, invaluable to a Sixth Form teacher; especially valuable on the comparison of Jewish and Greek religious development. The titles of the chapters will best indicate its scope.

I. Polytheism and Greek Monotheism.
II. Yahweh, the characteristic Semitic Deity.
III. Yahweh, the One and Only God.
IV. Yahweh, the Righteous God.
V. The Source of Mono-Yahwism.
VI. The value of the Jewish religion.
VII. The Messianic Hope.
VIII. Jesus and the Religion of the Jews.

Vol. II., *The Church* is of less interest, but contains an interesting short account of the period of 'The Acts.'

3. *C. G. Montefiore, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion, as illustrated by the religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (*Williams & Norgate*). Another good book on the same subject as the two above mentioned, much larger and fuller than Cornill, and perhaps rather simpler than Hamilton.

4. *R. H. Charles, Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments* (*Home University Library*). A short study by the greatest English authority on the Apocalyptic writers.

5. *C. M. Grant, Between the Testaments* (*A. & C. Black*). A popular history, in brief compass, of the period indicated by the title.

6. *Edwyn Bevan, Jerusalem under the High Priests* (*Arnold*). Covers the same ground as Grant, and is more scholarly and critical.

PART II

THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES OF CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER V

CHRIST

IT is not part of the plan of this book to treat in detail the story of Our Lord's life and death. That would require a book to itself, and it is a subject with which the reader ought to be already familiar. In the first part of this book we traced through thirteen centuries the religious history of a small nation, who believed themselves—not without reason as it appears to us—to be God's Chosen People. Throughout the rest of this book, after the present chapter, we shall be concerned with the subsequent history of God's Chosen People. That 'chosen people' will, however, be no more a small nation, membership of which is a matter of lineage, but an ever expanding Society, voluntarily entered and overriding national distinctions, known to history as the Christian Church. It was the work of Christ to effect that great transition, and it is from this point of view that we must consider His work, the central and supreme event in our religious history.

(i) *The substance of Christ's teaching.* The prophets had foretold the coming of the Kingdom of God, and had con-

ceived it under various forms, but always as something with a national basis, as a magnificent Expansion of Israel into a state of religious perfection, not unaccompanied by political and material glory. The apocalyptic writers of the last two centuries before Christ had figured it rather as a kingdom beyond the grave, heralded by the advent of a Messiah, who would first come in glory and justify before all the world the faithfulness of His chosen people. At the time of Christ's ministry, both these conceptions were current, intermingled with every variety of vague aspiration that piety or national vanity could suggest. Before Jesus entered on his ministry a new prophet had appeared, John the Baptist, whom some took for Elijah, returned to earth to herald the Messiah. His message was, "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" Many, however, had before now proclaimed it to be at hand, and it had not come.

Christ also preached the Kingdom of God, but His message was startlingly new. He said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." The Kingdom is already established; it is not a political kingdom, of which membership comes by right of birth or by conquest: it is not a kingdom in another world into which entry is only through the grave; the kingdom, it is true, extends beyond the grave and those who enter it here do not forfeit their citizenship when they die; but its establishment is on earth, and, if you will, you may enter it now.

What is the test of membership? The author of the First Gospel has, with fine dramatic insight, placed at the very beginning of his account of Christ's ministry a series of brief challenging sentences which answer that question. "Blessed are the poor:[1] blessed are they that mourn: blessed are the meek: blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: blessed are the merciful: blessed are the

[1] Matt. v. 3-11. St. Matthew writes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." St. Luke, however (vi. 20), simply says, "Blessed be ye poor," and many scholars consider this represents the original text of both gospels.

peacemakers: blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

To become a member of the Kingdom a man has got to look at life from a wholly new angle: he has got to be 'born again.' "Before the rich man can enter the kingdom he must realise that his wealth is so comparatively unimportant, that he is ready to give it all away rather than allow it to obscure his vision of God, and hinder him from entering the kingdom. The man of good social position must be prepared to become the servant of the poorest and meanest. The passionate man must be ready to cut off his hand or pluck out his eye, rather than lose the kingdom for the sake of indulging his passions. The Jew must be prepared to fraternise with the Samaritan, and the Pharisee with the publican, on equal terms, admitting the possibility that those whom before he despised and abhorred are very likely better and nearer to God's ideal than himself. All must be ready to give up friends, home, wealth, position, life itself, rather than miss entering the Kingdom of God."[1]

If a man love God, he will do these things. Love of God is the first Christian virtue, which sums up in itself all the others. For a man will show his love of God by loving his fellow man. Love of God and Love of Man are two aspects of the same thing.

Christ did not openly proclaim Himself as the Messiah. Indeed, as will be seen later, He somewhat carefully avoided the assertion of such a claim in words. But He acted in a way which, according to Jewish ideas, would be impossible to anyone not claiming divinity. He undertook to supersede the Law, and that not merely the tiresome regulations of the 'Traditions' of the Pharisees, but the sacred Ten Commandments themselves. The so-called 'Sermon on the Mount' in St. Matthew's gospel, from which we have already quoted

[1] Donald Hankey, *The Lord of All Good Life*, p. 33.

the opening sentences, goes on almost immediately to consider some of the Ten Commandments. "Ye have heard," he says, "that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; . . . but I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." Again, "Ye have heard how it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." [1]

Such teaching might well fill the hearts of its hearers with despair, especially when they recollected the teaching of their religion that Jehovah was a 'jealous god,' and punished not only the sins of the individual but "visited the sins of the fathers upon the children." The Law must have been like a millstone round the necks of all but the self-satisfied Pharisee, every clause an occasion of sin, every sin set down in an indelible record. This is what St. Paul alludes to when he says, "The strength of sin is the law:—But" he goes on immediately, "thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." [2] Christ preached the doctrine of forgiveness of sins.

Christ does not, as a rule, say, "I forgive you your sins." He says, "Your sins are forgiven." Forgiveness is the natural consequence and reward of repentance. The Greek word for repentance simply means, 'change of mind,' or 'change of character.' Once the sinner is genuinely resolved to lead a new life, he is a member of the kingdom. The consequences of the sin, of course, remain: external consequences in the form of injury done to others and loss of reputation by the sinner himself: even internal consequences too in the form of the influence of bad habits, which cannot be broken in a day. The members of the kingdom are not a community of saints; if they were the kingdom would not be of much practical interest to most of us. The members of the kingdom are those who are really doing their best, and the benefit of membership is the help they receive from their

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22, 43, 44. [2] I Cor. xv. 56, 57.

Invisible King, whom Christ taught men to think of not as a King, but as a Father.

When we described the message of Amos, the first of the great prophets, we pointed out how difficult it was for the modern Church-goer to realise how revolutionary, how *mad* such teaching must have seemed to those who first heard it. So it is, in an even greater degree, with the teaching of Christ. His words are so familiar that we know them by heart. Let me quote then the appreciation of it by a modern writer, who probably does not call himself a Christian at all.

" In view of what he plainly said, is it any wonder that all who were rich and prosperous felt a horror of strange things, a swimming of their world at his teaching? Perhaps the priests and the rulers and the rich men understood him better than his followers. He was dragging out all the little private reservations they had made from social service into the light of a universal religious life. He was like some terrible moral huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his, there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love. Is it any wonder that men were dazzled and blinded and cried out against him? . . . Is it any wonder that the priests realised that between this man and themselves there was no choice, but that he or priestcraft should perish? Is it any wonder that the Roman soldiers, confronted and amazed by something soaring over their comprehension and threatening all their disciplines, should take refuge in wild laughter, and crown him with thorns and robe him with purple and make a mock Caesar of him? For to take him seriously was to enter on a strange and alarming life, to abandon habits, to control instincts and impulses, to essay an incredible happiness. . . . Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilaean is too much for our small hearts? " [1]

[1] H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, p. 362. It may be doubted

(ii) *Christ's method in establishing the Church.* It has been necessary to state very shortly the fundamental ideas of Christ's teaching, partly because they are already familiar but still more because they are essentially simple. We have now to consider how the Christian Church, which was to supply the external organisation of the kingdom, came to be instituted. We are concerned, that is to say, not so much with the *substance* of Christ's teaching as with its *method.*

We do not know for certain how long Christ's ministry lasted. Some say it lasted three years and included several visits to Jerusalem ; others, that it only lasted one year and that the five days which began with the triumphal entry, and ended with the crucifixion were His only visit to the capital. St. Mark's Gospel on which, as regards the historical sequence of events, we must mainly depend, does not contain any clear information as to the length of the ministry. It is not, however, of any great importance. Whatever the length of the ministry, it falls into three clearly marked divisions ; the public ministry in Galilee ; a period spent partly in Galilee and partly outside it, in which, though He still sometimes addresses crowds of followers, Our Lord's main concern is with an inner circle of disciples who are continuously with Him ; and finally, the journey to Jerusalem and the last days there.

Galilee, where Christ had grown to manhood and worked as a carpenter, was a region that had played little part in Old Testament history. It lay to the north of the rich plain of Esdraelon, which had been the centre of the old Northern Kingdom, with its capitals at Jezreel and Samaria. Since the return from captivity, the country had been largely colonised by an overflow of Jews from Judaea. These had intermarried with the Gentile population and the result was a people of mixed character, regarded with contempt by the stricter Jews of the capital. No doubt they were a

whether Mr. Wells is on sure ground in saying there was to be ' no property ' in the kingdom.

simpler folk, comparatively unspoiled by the Pharisaism of Jerusalem. At any rate they did not suffer from the daily consciousness that they lived on holy ground, or from the ever recurring reminder, as each of the Great Feasts came round and Jews flocked from far and near into Jerusalem, that they lived at the hub of the universe and were ' not as other men.'

Christ preached the Kingdom in the villages of Galilee, especially in the little fishing town of Capernaum, where perhaps He was already well known. He was warmly welcomed and gladly heard. His winning and gracious personality, the telling simplicity of His parables, most of all perhaps the powers of healing the sick He possessed and freely exercised, drew such crowds that He often found it convenient to put out a few yards in a boat in order that He might get freedom and space for addressing them.

These ' miracles ' as we call them were not done in order to prove His divine powers, nor were they considered either by His friends or His enemies as affording any proof of such. They were done because it was impossible for Christ to witness suffering without doing what He could to remove it. Indeed, He found His fame as a healer a hindrance, rather than a help to His Ministry, since it drew attention to what was irrelevant and brought people to Him from the wrong motives. After effecting a cure He would say to the patient, " See thou say nothing of this to any man." But secrecy in the matter proved impossible.

Christ did not lay claim to the title of Messiah. Indeed, He spoke very little of Himself except to the chosen disciples alone. Naturally, however, people began to wonder. It was certainly not the kind of Messiah they had expected, but—could He be a mere man ? It seems to have been agreed that if He was Messiah, He would give them a " sign," perform, that is, some unmistakable wonder or miracle that would prove His powers superhuman beyond all possibility of cavil.

That, however, was just what Christ did not do ; it was the course He had rejected from the first. In both the First and the Third Gospels we have accounts [1] of what is known as "The Temptation," and they represent, no doubt, what Our Lord told His disciples of His own early spiritual doubts and struggles. Each of the three proposals made by the Devil in these accounts is a suggestion that, in one way or another, Christ should fulfil the traditional expectations by astonishing miracles in the materialistic sphere,—that He should provide economic plenty by turning stones into bread ; that He should replace the Roman by a Jewish Empire ; that He should astound Jerusalem by a superhuman leap from the pinnacle of the Temple. But Christ's appeal was addressed to the heart, to the intelligence, to the conscience. These people said, "Prove yourself divine by a miraculous display and we will believe all you say." Christ, however, demanded that men give His teaching a trial in faith : if they did, they would find therein and nowhere else the proof that He was divine.

It was not long before He attracted the attention of the Scribes or Rabbis of the neighbourhood—the Pharisees, that is,—and these sent reports to Jerusalem which quickly brought down more important Pharisees from headquarters. The hostility of the Pharisees began no doubt with mere professional jealousy. Here was an uneducated carpenter teaching in a new style, "with authority and not as the Scribes," and securing a great popular following. What business had He to teach at all ? He was what doctors would call a 'quack,' a man setting up in practice without any degrees or diplomas to show he had gone through the proper training. They at once set themselves to pick holes, and they were not long in finding holes to pick. He consorted with publicans and sinners ! He and His disciples omitted to fast at the proper times ! He performed a cure on the Sabbath ! When it came to an encounter of words the learned men fared much less well than they had expected.

[1] Matt. iv. ; Luke iv.

On occasions Our Lord beat them at their own favourite game by justifying His action from Scripture—"Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered?" At other times He confounded their pedantries by going straight to the plain issue between right and wrong as common-sense or the common conscience must see it. "Is it right to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" And again, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Such were the general conditions of the public ministry in Galilee. Very little came of it, so far as Galilee was concerned. Galilee, no doubt, furnished the crowd that strewed branches in the way and shouted 'Hosanna!' on His entry into Jerusalem. But after that, what do we hear of Galilee? Practically nothing. It was in Jerusalem and not in Galilee that the faithful few established the Christian Church after the Resurrection.

Meanwhile, being worsted in these verbal contests with Our Lord, the Pharisees tried another plan. We read in St. Mark's Gospel that after the incident of the healing of the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees approached the 'Herodians,' the courtiers, that is, of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. This Herod had already imprisoned and executed John the Baptist for denouncing his immoral marriage with his brother's wife, and no doubt he would have been ready enough to treat Jesus in the same way. Henceforth, Jesus avoids Capernaum and the western shore of Galilee where He is best known. He travels to the north and to the east of Galilee, largely non-Jewish areas and outside the dominions of Herod. He devotes Himself no longer to public preaching, but to intimate converse with His disciples. The Feeding of the Five Thousand was one of the last incidents of the Galilaean Ministry, and it occurred when the grass was green, *i.e.* between springtime and the midsummer heats which turn the whole country brown. We may, then, place the incident

in June. From June to the following Easter, the time of the Crucifixion, Christ is for the most part alone with His disciples.

At the beginning of His ministry Christ had chosen twelve disciples (pupils or learners) and attached them with special closeness to Himself. They are also called Apostles (missionaries), and on one occasion during His life He sent them out in pairs to teach in His name, but, in the main, we must figure them as disciples rather than apostles during the Master's life-time. What were they to learn? They were to learn, with a conviction that nothing should shake, that He was indeed the Messiah, the Christ, and that nothing in the world mattered in comparison with the spread of the Kingdom to which they were dedicated. Of them, as compared with the kindly but fickle Galilaean crowd, Christ spoke in the parable of the Sower. They were the 'good ground,' on which alone the seed of the word bore fruit. While all the rest withered away, the seed sown in their hearts was not only to survive but to produce thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold.

As with the Galilaean crowd, so with the disciples. Christ did not assert He was Messiah. He left them to find it out for themselves by watching His work in Galilee and His replies to the Pharisees; still more through His private converse with themselves. At last the time was ripe. They had journeyed away alone beyond the Jewish villages into the Syrian country to the north. Christ turned to them, and said, "Whom do men say that I am?" They answered, "Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets." Then He said, "But whom say ye that I am?" It was Peter who took the awful plunge: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

The first stage was now accomplished. The new 'chosen people,' the Church that was to be, had recognised that all the pious hopes of Israel were thus strangely fulfilled in the foundation of a little society of humble, ignorant men, knit

together by a new view of God, a new attitude to life. At once the second and harder stage began. He told them that the Christ they had accepted must die the death of a felon : that the road to success was through apparent failure. Once more the doubts of the disciples were renewed, and coloured now by fear more than by hope.

Our Lord, it would seem, went to Jerusalem prepared to die. He voluntarily provoked His enemies to do their worst. Unbidden, He entered the arena. Had He wished to renew His Galilaean triumphs, had He wished to prolong His time of quiet association with the disciples, all the evidence seems to show that it was open to Him, even by merely human means, to do so. But it was not needed. All His life Christ had, like all great teachers, taught even more by deeds than by words. It was what He was even more than what He said that convinced. The Crucifixion was His last and greatest parable, a parable not spoken but acted. How else could He have clinched for ever His great argument that *nothing* matters in comparison with the coming of the Kingdom ?

At first the disciples could not understand it. On the night of the Crucifixion " they all forsook Him and fled."

What followed ? Very likely the opinions of Christians will always differ somewhat as to what in detail followed. In what exact sense did Christ ' rise from the dead ' ? The gospels themselves indicate that even the disciples, who underwent those strange experiences of the next few days, found it hard, or indeed impossible, to describe to others precisely what had happened. But, at least, they knew that though their Master's body had been crucified, His Spirit had risen and returned to lead them. On the main point there can be absolutely no doubt whatever. *Christianity* rose from the grave. Those same disciples who had feared and hesitated and doubted on the journey to Jerusalem : who on the eve of the first Good Friday had simply misunderstood and played the coward :—these same disciples

on the first Whitsunday appeared in Jerusalem, and in tones of triumphant confidence that ring down the ages gave their message to the world.

" Ye men of Israel, hear these words : Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know ; Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay : whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death : because it was not possible that He should be holden of it . . . Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." [1]

Thus the Christian Church was founded.

[1] Acts ii. 22-36

CHAPTER VI

THE WORK OF THE FIRST GENERATION

THE period covered by the book known as the *Acts of the Apostles* is about thirty years (about 29 to 59 A.D.), but the developments which it records constitute a religious revolution. At the beginning the Christian Church is a small handful of Jews, passionately devoted to their national traditions, and differing from the rest of their fellow-countrymen only in that they believe that the Messiah, still expected by the rest, has actually come and, though unrecognised and rejected, has founded His Kingdom. The Christians are, in effect, a new Jewish sect, and their prime concern is to convert their fellow-countrymen and co-religionists to their own way of thinking. The Master's own work had been among the Jews, and though He did not refuse to help the Gentile when called upon to do so, and even contrasted at times the faith of the Gentile with the indifference of the Jew, He had left it to His disciples to discover for themselves that His Kingdom must, by its very nature, come to include Jew and Gentile alike. At present the disciples did not see this implication, and had no thought of preaching further afield than their Master had done.

At the end of the period covered by the *Acts* the Christian Church has already become, as it remains to-day, a predominantly European institution, a religion not of the Semites but of the Aryans. At Philippi, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome, at many other cities visited by St. Paul,

and at still more, probably, of which in the *Acts* we have no mention, Christian communities, predominantly Gentile, have been founded. They accept the God of the Jews as their God; they accept the rejected Messiah of the Jews as their Christ, but they have not accepted the Jewish law nor entered the Jewish community by circumcision. Further, even those Jews, now a small minority in the Church, who have accepted Christianity have come to admit that the Law is no longer necessary to salvation. By the Jewish race as a whole, however, Christianity has been once for all finally rejected.

How did the Apostles, as we may now call the first disciples, come to undertake enterprises going apparently so far beyond anything suggested by the brief ministry of Christ? They would have had, themselves, no difficulty in answering this question: indeed, their answer stares us in the face on almost every page of the *Acts*. They believed that, just as Christ had once taught them by human act and speech, so now by inward guidance they were taught, and led from point to point in their great expansion, by the Holy Spirit.

In this chapter, for the first time, we pass out beyond the narrow limits of the Jewish race into the wider world. The conversion of the Gentiles remains incomprehensible unless we have some notion of the religious ideas of the Gentile world at the time when Christianity began to penetrate it. The first task of the modern missionary is to understand both the strong and the weak points of the religion of the people to whom he is going. Thus the Indian missionary must understand the Hindu religion: if he does not, he will be as helpless as if he were ignorant of the Hindu language. The time when all outside Christianity were conveniently lumped together as 'poor benighted heathen' is long passed. It is because St. Paul, the Jew of Tarsus, understood so well the religious aspirations of the typical thoughtful Gentile in the Greek cities of the Levant that he proved the greatest of missionaries.

This chapter will, then, fall conveniently into three sections:

(i) The Church in Jerusalem, and the early relations of Christians and Jews.

(ii) The religious ideas of the Roman Empire at the time of Christ.

(iii) The spread of Christianity among the Gentiles; more particularly, the work of St. Paul.

(i) *The Church in Jerusalem.* The Apostles, it is generally admitted, started on their missionary work suffering from one serious but very natural delusion. The most spiritual of the pre-Christian Messianic writers, as, for instance, the writer or writers of the Book of *Enoch*, had figured the appearance of the Messiah as a prelude to the End of the World, which was to follow very shortly. This idea the Apostles took over; they foresaw Christ's Second Coming as an awful event of the near future. Their task was to prepare their fellow-countrymen, to convert them; and there was no time to be lost. Hence all apparently non-essential differences between believers and unbelievers must be kept in the background, and, in particular, differences as to the sanctity of the Law and the Temple. We cannot really tell to-day how far the Apostles, in the brief period we are considering, had grasped Christ's real attitude as the first three gospels now make it plain to us. Those gospels were not written till after St. Paul's career. However that may be, whether from a policy of conforming on non-essential points or from genuine conservatism, the Apostles set themselves to treat the Law and the Temple ritual with scrupulous respect.

Their policy had the desirable result of protecting them from serious persecution. Their only enemies were the Sadducees, who rejected the very idea of resurrection from the dead. We gather from the *Acts* (chapters iv. and v.) that the Sadducees tried to get them condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, and that they were successfully defended

by the Pharisee Gamaliel, famous otherwise as the teacher of St. Paul.

But events forced their hands. Few incidents in the New Testament are more puzzling at first sight than what occurred immediately before St. Peter's great speech proclaiming the resurrection on the day of Pentecost. We read[1] that "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia . . . Cretes and Arabians" all heard the divine message. Who were these? They were, as the narrative tells us, not Gentiles but "Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven."

In the time of Our Lord the Jews were a race almost as widely scattered, relatively to the limits of the then known world, as they are to-day. The 'Dispersion,' as it is called, began when a Jewish community remained behind in Babylon after the return from the Captivity. It grew again westwards when Alexander founded Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile. Then the Jews spread and prospered, shrewd and intrepid money-makers, obstinately unassimilable by their surroundings, even as they are in London and Hamburg and New York to-day. The Jews of the Dispersion were already far more numerous and far more wealthy than the Jews of Palestine.

An occasion like the feast of Pentecost would bring back crowds of these on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Many heard the gospel and welcomed it, and, doubtless, prolonged their visit in order to hear more. Thus a second Christian group formed itself round the first. A system of generous charitableness, amounting almost to a kind of rough and ready communism of goods, was instituted, that all might share alike,—for was not the end of the world at hand, and what was the use of accumulating 'capital' or returning to the ordinary courses of bread-winning?

Difficulties in the administration of these charities led to

[1] Acts ii. 1-13.

the appointment of seven Deacons, all of them apparently Hellenists, as the Jews of the Dispersion are conveniently called.

Now it was quite inevitable that the Hellenist Jew should regard the Law and the claims of the Temple somewhat differently from the Jew of Jerusalem. For the latter, they were a source of unalloyed pride; for the former, an impossible incubus and a badge of his inferiority. Non-observance of the Law was theoretically treason to Jehovah. But how could the Jew of Alexandria, or Ephesus or Corinth, still more the Jew living almost isolated from his fellow-nationals in the smaller cities, keep pace with the demands of the orthodox, or even attend the three annual feasts with anything approaching regularity? We know from the writings of the Alexandrine Jew Philo that there was already a sect among the Hellenists that had proclaimed that the Law was allegorical, or, in plain words, that it did not mean what it said.

Thus the Hellenist Jew was drawn to Christianity by the very elements that repelled the Jew of Jerusalem. He welcomed Christianity, and having done so proceeded to emphasise those very elements in it which the Apostles were keeping in the background. The first of the deacons was a very bold, eloquent, and radical-minded preacher named Stephen. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, from the brief account we possess of his meteoric career to reconstruct his point of view with entire certainty. One thing, however, is plain. He created, as the Apostles had *not* done, the impression that Christianity was the enemy of Judaism. He taught that Christ was the successor of the prophets, and that those who had crucified Him, Pharisees and Sadducees alike, were the successors of the enemies of God who had stoned the prophets. Whipped up by their leaders, the rabble of Jerusalem stoned him to death likewise.[1] The Christians fled from Jerusalem, and started preaching north-

[1] Acts vii.

wards all the way to Antioch, with persecution dogging their footsteps under the leadership of Saul of Tarsus.

Events now move rapidly. Another Hellenist deacon, Philip, converts a Gentile, an Ethiopian of high position.[1] Saul, the persecuter, is converted.[2] Peter, the leader of the Law-observing Apostles, is directed by a special intervention of the Holy Spirit to convert the Gentile Cornelius.[3] Finally we pass beyond particularised exceptions and read that "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they were come unto Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."[4]

(The duration of time between the Crucifixion of Christ and the Conversion of Paul is uncertain; possibly six years (29-35).)

(ii) *Religious ideas in the Roman Empire at the time of Christ.* We have seen how, through the work of the prophets, Israel advanced from a religious state, differing little from ordinary Semitic paganism, to a belief in one God, the omnipotent creator of the world, and how within that Jewish monotheism there was founded a sect of 'Christians.' This sect of Christians was now to enter into competition with and finally supplant the religions of the Gentiles, of the Roman Empire. Of what sort were those religions?

In considering this subject we may really ignore the Romans and concentrate our attention on the Greeks. It was not merely that the Greeks were nearer to Judaea than the Romans and so came first. The Romans, though great masters of war and politics, were always singularly destitute of ideas in the realms of art, philosophy and religion. Nearly everything of value in Latin literature has borrowed either its form or its ideas from the Greeks. The Mediterranean world of Our Lord's day, though a Roman Empire, was a Greek civilisation. Alexander's conquests had sown Greek ideas all over the eastern Mediterranean. Roman conquest

[1] Acts viii. 27 *sq.* [2] ix. 4. [3] x. [4] xi. 20.

did not Romanise the culture of the East, but Hellenised the culture of the West. The Near East remained Greek for a thousand years from Alexander's time, until the result of another conquest from the opposite direction made it Arab and Mohammedan, as it remains to this day.

To understand Greek religion in the time of Christ we must make a brief survey of the previous five hundred years.

When the Greeks came into the broad daylight of history with their victory over the Persians (battle of Marathon (490 B.C.), midway in date between Zerubbabel and Ezra), they were, for the most part, genuine worshippers of the deities made familiar to us by their incomparable poetry and sculpture. Everyone knows the name of Zeus, the father of the Gods, and Hera his wife, Apollo, the sun-god, as also the god of archery and much else besides, Pallas Athene, the goddess of the arts, Aphrodite and Ares, Love and War, and the rest. The Romans adapted their own dull deities to fit in with the Greek mythology, and Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Venus and Mars figure as feeble imitations of their Greek originals. The origin and real nature of this polytheism is a fascinating subject, into which we cannot go here.[1] It must suffice for us that it was polytheism. The various deities were associated with the various forces of nature, the sun, the moon, the sea; also with the various impulses of man, wisdom, love, war, wine; and also—for all polytheisms are an amalgamation of inconsistent religious ideas—with various tribes or cities. Thus Athene was the patron goddess of Athens as Jehovah was the patron god of Israel, with this difference that Athene was not a 'jealous' goddess, and had no objections to sharing the devotion of the Athenians with other deities. The main point to notice is that none of these deities was omnipotent. They were personified 'forces,' whether within or without man, and their power was limited by the power of their rivals. Hence the idea of strife among the gods. Hence, also, their immorality; for stories of the

[1] See Gilbert Murray's *Four Stages in Greek Religion*.

strife between the gods inevitably led to stories of the strange tricks whereby one god would steal a march on another. These gods and goddesses are, in fact, magnified men and women, magnified in power, and also, since power is with man himself a source of severe temptation, magnified in their unscrupulous use of power. They are full of 'devilry.'

Here we have, in fact, a 'nature religion.'[1] Its source is primitive man's attempt to explain to himself, in default of natural science, the world of nature. With the rise of natural science it is bound to fade into incredibility, and for natural science the Greeks displayed an astonishing aptitude.

It is as impossible to explain the unique intellectual output of the Greeks during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. as it is to explain the output of the Hebrew prophets. These two marvellous things happened, and the modern world is built on the foundations laid by both. May we not say also that God inspired both movements?

Polytheism assumes that each event in nature is due to the direct action of the appropriate god. When it thunders, it is because Zeus is angry; when the harvest fails, Demeter, the goddess of crops, has been offended and withholds her gifts. The Greeks, however, began to 'put two and two together,' with a boldness and subtlety hitherto unequalled. The idea of a Law of Causation, the idea that all the happenings of the world formed an immense network of causes and effects, each effect being in turn the cause of the next effect, not only laid the foundations of science but doomed polytheism.

These early philosophers or scientists were, as we should say, materialists. They sought to explain the uniformity of nature's laws by suggesting that all the changes were modifications of a single primary substance or element, be it earth, air, fire, or water. Socrates, however, "found the world full of what was evidently intended to minister to human well-being. From these evidences as to the purpose

[1] See page 18.

of the world he drew the conclusion that there is one omnipresent, omniscient, and benevolent Being, who is the source and author of everything that is."[1] His disciple, Plato, perhaps the most splendid intellect in history, regarded the world as a unity, the parts of which work together for the good of the whole. The soul of man is the 'divinest' thing in the world and is evidence of the existence of God. Aristotle, again, the disciple of Plato and the tutor of Alexander the Great, conceives of one transcendent Being, the Cause of all things, the Universal Mind. Aristotle, under the patronage of Alexander, was the first man to organise scientific research on a large scale, and plan a complete exploration of the field of human knowledge. If Plato is the greatest architect of human knowledge, Aristotle is its first great master-builder. These three men, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, cover a little over a century—roughly 430 to 320 B.C.

In other spheres of Greek literature we can see the same processes at work. Aeschylus, the first of the great Greek tragedians, attempted, almost in the manner of a Hebrew prophet, to ennoble and moralise the traditional religion, giving the old legends a new meaning, and figuring Zeus as an all-just Judge. This was in the first half of the fifth century. In the second half comes Euripides, and with deadly irony devotes himself to exposing by subtle hints all that is incredible, and worse, immoral, in the old stories. He shows that men and women are far nobler than the deities they are deluded into worshipping.

Again, take the historians. Herodotus, roughly contemporary with Aeschylus, is full of incredible tales, and though he hardly deserves to be called religious he is at least superstitious. Thucydides, his successor, on the other hand, knows of no superhuman intervention in human affairs save the incalculable and unalterable decrees of fate.

Thus the Greeks, like the Hebrews, won through to mono-

[1] Hamilton, *The People of God*, vol. i. p. 32; to whom I am indebted for much in the first part of this section.

theism. But it is all-important to observe how different were their processes, and how different the result. The Hebrew prophets knew no more of science than their contemporaries, in fact a great deal less than the wise men of Egypt and Chaldaea. They brought to bear on primitive religion nothing but new and higher religious ideas. They never disputed or doubted the existence of the popular deity, Jehovah. Rather, they said in effect, "This Jehovah whom you and I worship alike and acknowledge as the God of Israel, is not only this but more. He is the creator and sustainer of the whole world, who has bestowed on us alone the unique privilege of his protection, and his chief concern is not for our sacrifices and our military victories, but for the purity and nobility of our common life." Thus the Hebrews did not lose one religion and find another; they raised their old religion to a higher plane, and once the higher plane had been reached the worship of Jehovah gathered about itself all the love and reverence that ancient tradition alone can bring. Their very ignorance of historical science helped them here, for they were soon able to persuade themselves that the faith, which in reality they owed to the prophets and to Ezra, had been theirs since the days of Moses or even of Abraham.

The Greek philosophers, on the other hand, cut the roots of primitive Greek religion and it withered away into mere superstition. It was only after the philosophic teaching had done its essential work of destruction that it offered, as a kind of after-thought, as an alternative to materialism, a philosophic faith in a Supreme Being, a Universal Mind. This Supreme Being was often described as 'Zeus,' but he was quite demonstrably a different being from the genial and spasmodic patriarch of Mount Olympus. The position of the new 'Zeus' in relation to the old may be compared with that of a new commercial firm which adopts, for the purpose of securing custom, the name of the senior partner in the old bankrupt establishment, whose business it has bought up

and whose premises it has occupied. The 'real name' of Aristotle's God was not 'Zeus,' but 'Universal Mind.'

Belief in this new 'Zeus' could only be attained as the result of a long process of philosophic argument. The argument in question was perhaps a good one, but most people are too lazy or too stupid to follow philosophic arguments. And even if you followed the argument and grasped its conclusion, you were not, from a religious point of view, much better off. The only thing that could be known about this 'Zeus' was that he was Unknowable. It was difficult to suppose, and unreasonable to assume, that the fate of the mere individual man was his close concern, or that he was to be influenced by prayer.

In 1883 a great debate took place in the House of Commons when Mr. Gladstone scandalised old-fashioned people by proposing that a professed atheist should be allowed to sit as a member, and dispense with the customary oath of allegiance. One of the speakers remarked, "After all, we all believe in a God of some sort or other,"—all, that is, except the atheist under discussion. Gladstone's reply was to the effect that belief in "a God of some sort or other" does not deserve the name of religion. For the ordinary citizen of the Roman Empire, belief in the God of Greek philosophy could be no more than belief in a God of some sort or other.

It is impossible not to admire the position of the genuine disciple of Greek philosophy, proudly independent in the midst of a world whose meaning he has explored as deeply as human intellect could then go,—standing alone, with nothing above him but this passionless Universal Mind which his own logic has led him to conceive. But such a faith is of no use to ordinary man. We have now to see how the religious vacuum created by the great philosophers was filled in the four centuries that lie between Aristotle and St. Paul.

After the deaths of Aristotle and Alexander we pass into an age of inferior men, just as surely as when we pass from

the prophets to the scribes. Greek culture was spread all over the East, but, as is the way with things that are spread over a wide area, it was spread rather thin, and the proudly independent little republics of Greece in which Greek culture had arisen were destroyed. At Alexandria, indeed, for a century and more, great things were done in the sphere of natural science. Euclid wrote his geometry; Eratosthenes measured the size of the earth and came within fifty miles of its true diameter; others developed the science of medicine and the study of human anatomy.[1] But in the sphere of philosophy and religion we are among scribes and rabbis rather than prophets and philosophers.

Two great schools arose which sought to bring philosophy nearer to practical life, to make it 'more religious' by establishing a close contact between philosophy and conduct. These were the Stoics and the Epicureans.

The Stoic[2] school of philosophy was founded by Zeno at Athens about 300 B.C., but it attained its greatest importance in later times as the rule of life of some of the noblest of the Romans, such as Cato, the opponent of Julius Caesar (died 46 B.C.), Seneca, the tutor and minister of Nero (died 65 A.D.), and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (died 180 A.D.), whose *Meditations* have been a favourite book with men of many different schools of thought since the time of the Renaissance. The leading idea of the Stoics, on the ethical and religious side, was the cultivation of self-sufficiency. Man steers a frail barque in a storm-tossed world. He can only steer a true course by the diligent cultivation of wisdom and virtue. God, or the gods (for the Stoics use both terms indifferently), rule all, and man must live in harmony with their will. "Would you," says Seneca, "propitiate the Gods? Be good! He has worshipped them enough who has imitated them." In raising its disciples above human weakness Stoicism goes dangerously near raising them above human

[1] Wells, *Outline of History*, p. 249.

[2] *Stoic* is derived from the 'Porch' (*stoa*) in which Zeno lectured.

sympathy also. It is well to be fortified against the threats and bribes of 'the world.' When the Stoic is consistent (as, to his own credit, he often is not) he must be fortified against its love, its pity, and its cry for help also. The Stoic despises emotion and seeks to subordinate it to reason;—a creed which can only result in an attempt to enslave what should be the prime source of human energy. The religions that have helped ordinary, sinful humanity are those which enlist the emotions, the passions, in their service.

Epicurus founded the Epicurean school at Athens at about the same time as Zeno founded the Stoic. The Epicureans taught that the gods, though they existed, were totally unconcerned with the life of man and the affairs of this world,—a belief equivalent, for all practical purposes, to the denial of their existence. They found that the aim of life was Happiness, and that happiness could only be attained by a life of moderation and virtue. The essence of happiness is a quiet conscience: so be prudent. Prudence is the foundation of all the virtues. "We cannot," Epicurus says, "live pleasantly without living wisely and nobly and righteously." Virtue is a means to happiness, and apart from that it has no meaning. This emphasis on Happiness and Pleasure gave rival schools of philosophy a pretext for circulating scandal about the Epicureans. They were accused of exalting the pleasures of the body as the end and aim of life. Our word 'epicure' is evidence of the disgrace into which the term Epicurean ultimately fell. The poet Horace humorously describes himself as 'a pig from Epicurus' herd.' Epicurus himself, however, was a teetotaller and a vegetarian, and preached moderation in things physical as a means of happiness; and Lucretius, the most austere of Latin poets, the 'Milton' of Ancient Rome, was a devout Epicurean.

These philosophies, however, were of little use to the ordinary man and woman. They felt the need of a religion that would satisfy their emotions, and what they needed they took care that they got. Philosophy was only for the

educated. For the rest, the old gods lived on and were worshipped at local shrines and oracles, and new gods, more fascinating and mysterious, were imported from the East—Cybele, the Phrygian Earth-Mother, goddess of fertility, and the Egyptian Isis. These religions, full of romance and mystery, offered the attractions of sensational ritual. There were baths and purifications, vigils spent by night in temples, strange costumes, barbaric music, and, of course, miracles. To the emotions they made a gross appeal, but they scarcely touched morality. To the terrors of life, already many enough, they added crowning fears, and cramped and dwarfed the minds of men and women.

Many philosophers thought this was all for the best. 'The people' are fools and knaves by nature: nothing but a strong dosing in superstition will keep them docile. As one Roman writer says, "It is the interest of states to be deceived in religion." Polybius, a Greek writing a history of Rome about 150 B.C., says that the rulers of Rome "use religion as a check upon the common people. Seeing that the multitude is fickle and full of lawless desires, the only resource to keep them in check is by mysterious terrors and scenic effects." [1]

Far nobler was the attitude of the Epicurean Lucretius, who wrote

> "Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum"
> ("To such evils can religion bring mankind.").

"Human life," he says elsewhere, "lay visibly before men's eyes foully crushed under the weight of Religion, who showed her head from the realms of Heaven hideously lowering upon men," till Epicurus "dared first to uplift mortal eyes against her face and first to withstand her . . . The living force of his soul gained the day; on he passed far beyond the flaming ramparts of the world and traversed in mind and spirit the immeasurable universe. Thence he returns a conqueror . . .

[1] Polybius vi. 56, quoted in Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 4.

and so Religion is put under our feet and trampled on in its turn." [1]

Nevertheless, the religion of Isis and kindred cults offered something that men wanted and Lucretius could not give. They offered initiation into a 'Mystery,' as it was called, "the offer of happiness in this world and salvation in a world to come to all who by initiation into their sacraments joined in the risen life of a Redeemer God, such as Horus the son of Isis who died and rose again. The members of the cult thus secured knowledge of a great secret which would guard the traveller when he passed hence through the gate of death on his long and dangerous journey, and bring him safely to the eternal life which he desired." [2]

But there were some for whom Epicurus and Zeno were too abstract, and Isis and Cybele too sensational. These found something that irresistibly appealed to them in the religion of the Jews who were to be found in every Greek city. Some became complete converts to Judaism and underwent the rite of circumcision. A much larger number, in all probability, remained active sympathisers and fellow-worshippers without undergoing the somewhat repulsive rite. These are mentioned more than once in the New Testament as 'God-fearers.' Cornelius was one of them, whom Peter converted as the result of a vision. "They adopted the Jewish form of worship, with its monotheism and absence of images, and frequented the Jewish synagogues, but confined themselves with regard to the ceremonial law to certain cardinal points . . . such as the observance of the Sabbath and the laws regarding food." [3] Others probably, like certain of the Jews themselves, treated the Law as allegorical and observed only Jewish monotheism and the Jewish moral law. These God-fearers stood midway between the Jewish and

[1] Lucretius, i. 62-79, Glover, p. 25.

[2] Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Saint Paul*, p. 40 (slightly expanded to supply context).

[3] *Ibid.* p. 38.

the Gentile worlds, and provided the bridge by which Christianity crossed from the one to the other.

(iii) *St. Paul.* We broke off the narrative of events (see page 82) at the martyrdom of St. Stephen and the conversion of St. Paul.

St. Paul was the son of a Jew of Tarsus and had received his education in the Pharisee schools of Jerusalem. His views at the time of the first preaching of Christianity were probably those of his master Gamaliel. He was prepared to allow the new sect a contemptuous toleration, since by observing the Law and upholding the doctrine of resurrection they at least showed themselves Pharisees rather than Sadducees. What he and his fellow-Pharisees could not afford to tolerate for a moment was the new form Christianity was assuming in the hands of the Hellenist Jews. When these proclaimed that the Law had been superseded by Christ, all the Pharisee in St. Paul was revolted, and he led the savage heresy-hunt which followed the execution of St. Stephen.

"What caused the sudden change which so astonished the survivors among his victims? To suppose that nothing prepared for the vision near Damascus, that the apparition in the sky was a mere 'bolt from the blue' is an impossible theory. The best explanation is furnished by a study of the Apostle's character, which we really know very well. The author of the Epistles was certainly not a man who could watch a young saint being battered to death by howling fanatics and feel no emotion. Stephen's speech may have made him indignant; his heroic death, the very ideal of martyrdom, must have awakened very different feelings. An under-current of dissatisfaction, almost of disgust, at the dry and unspiritual seminary teaching of the Pharisees now surged up and came very near the surface. His bigotry sustained him as a persecutor for a few weeks more; but how if he could himself see what the dying Stephen said that

he saw? Would not that be a welcome liberation? The vision came in the desert where men see visions and hear voices to this day. 'The Spirit of Jesus,' as he came to call it, spoke to his heart, and the form of Jesus flashed before his eyes. Stephen had been right; the Crucified was indeed the Lord from Heaven. So Saul became a Christian; and it was to the Christianity of Stephen, not to that of the first Christians of Jerusalem, that he was converted."[1]

From this date onwards (the Conversion of St. Paul is generally dated 35 A.D., or about six years after Our Lord's Crucifixion), there were two rival centres of Christian activity, Jerusalem and Antioch. The Church at Jerusalem was still occupied with the forlorn hope of converting the Jews; that of Antioch addressed itself to the Gentiles. Gentile converts no doubt accepted much that was strictly Jewish theology, the belief, for example, in the Messianic Kingdom, but in seeking to enter this they were in no mind to enter the Jewish Church: they were baptised, but not circumcised.

The history of the rivalry between the two Christian movements has been to a large extent lost. Three incidents only need be mentioned here. (i) St. Barnabas, a Hellenist but a member of the Jerusalem community, was sent down to Antioch to investigate. He was completely converted to St. Paul's point of view and became his closest fellow-worker, and his companion on his first missionary journey. (ii) The Judaizing party, *i.e.* those who wished to exclude from the Christian Church all who refused to accept circumcision and the Jewish Law, organised a rival mission which followed St. Paul round the course of his first journey and attacked his 'heresies.' (iii) This incident led to a conference between St. Paul and St. Barnabas on the one side and the leading apostles of the Church of Jerusalem on the other, particularly St. Peter, and St. James, the brother of Our Lord. St. Peter and St. James recognised that the marvellous success of St. Paul's mission clearly proved that the Divine blessing was upon it.

[1] Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, p. 218.

Their aim was to find a formula which, while leaving St. Paul free on all essentials, would satisfy the more timid-minded of the Jewish believers. The results of the conference were wholly satisfactory to St. Paul. It was agreed that Gentiles should be accepted as members of the Church without any conformity to Judaism, so long as they gave evidence by their life of the sincerity of their conversion. The agreed formula was that they should be required to refrain from idolatry, murder, and fornication.[1]

After the Council, of which the accepted date is 49 A.D., St. Paul undertook his second and third missionary journeys, visiting and founding churches in the great cities round the Aegean, the cradle of Greek civilisation. He spent a year and a half in Corinth and two years at Ephesus, the chief

[1] I adopt here a view held by various modern writers and stated, for example, in Lake's *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*, pp. 31-33. The text of the *Acts* (xv. 29) in the Revised Version reads, "that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." There are two serious difficulties in the way of accepting this as a true version of the formula. In the first place it seems against common sense and almost against decency to couple together, as of equal importance, the first, second and third terms, which imply the Jewish food law, and the fourth, which relates to a serious moral offence. Secondly, if this was really the decision of the Council, later history shows it was never observed, and it would be unlike St. Luke, who was a skilful historian, to give such prominence as he does to a decision which was from the first a dead letter and therefore of no practical importance. St. Paul's Epistles are also completely silent on the subject.

Examination of the Greek text shows, however, that the word for 'things sacrificed to idols' (εἰδωλόθυτα) may equally well mean 'idolatry,' and that 'blood' may mean not the blood in meat killed after the Gentile manner, but 'bloodshed.' There remains 'things strangled,' and it is suggested that these words were inserted in the text by some early commentator as an explanation (a wrong explanation) of 'blood.'

If the old view is accepted, the decision of the Council was a compromise between Judaizing and Pauline demands. The Judaizers abandoned the claim to circumcision but made good, for the moment and in the letter, their claim to the Gentile observance of the food law. If the view I have adopted is accepted, the decision becomes, as stated in the text, a complete victory for St. Paul's party. It is impossible to state in full the case for or against either view here.

cities of the two Roman provinces of Achaia and Asia, and made shorter sojourns at Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and elsewhere. St. Luke, the author of the Acts and St. Paul's fellow-traveller, is obviously impressed by the orderliness and tolerance of the Roman government and the important part it unconsciously played in facilitating St. Paul's work. Gallio, for example, the Roman governor of Achaia (he was also the brother of the Stoic Seneca) has generally been regarded, on the strength of St. Luke's narrative, as the type of worldly indifference to religion. He ' cared for none of these things.' Such was not at all St. Luke's idea in bringing him to the readers' notice. For St. Luke he is the strong, impartial ruler who ensures fair play between religious disputants and refuses to deliver over the Christian missionary to the tender mercies of his clamorous Jewish rivals. Gallio is, in fact, the prototype of the British Government of India, which is ' neutral ' in religion and ensures freedom for Hindu, Moslem, and Christian missionary alike.

St. Paul's procedure in all cases was to preach first to the Jews in their synagogue. Only when rejected by them did he turn to the Gentiles. It is here that the great importance of the Gentile God-fearers attending the synagogue comes in. Probably many God-fearers who had attended the synagogue and heard him there followed him to his meeting-place outside and formed the nucleus of the new Gentile congregation. For the God-fearers must have found that, amid much that attracted them, there was not a little that repelled them in the faith of their Jewish friends. The narrow race-pride of the Jews refused to admit the equality of the God-fearer with themselves. But the Christian missionary abolished this invidious distinction once for all. He proclaimed that the Jewish Messiah had come, that the barriers between Jew and Gentile were thrown down, that all could enter on terms of equality into the Kingdom of God. It is easy to understand, therefore, the virulence with which the Jews hated these Christian missionaries. That mere pagan Gentiles should be

converted to a faith which the Jews would regard as a blasphemous parody of Judaism might have been bad enough, but it was much worse when they saw the Christian ' playing pied piper ' on those particular Gentiles whom they had attracted to Judaism, whose children they hoped, perhaps, to be allowed to circumcise and thus secure as full members of the Jewish community.

And what of the rest of St. Paul's Gentile audience?—for the God-fearers, having forsaken the Jews, would no doubt bring with them anti-Jewish Gentile friends. Some of these might be followers of the philosophers. To such St. Paul would show that the ' Unknown God ' who figured as a dim shadow in their philosophical treatises, the Omnipotent Being who loved Righteousness, was in very truth the God he had come to preach to them. Others would perhaps be initiates in the mysteries of Isis or Cybele. To such St. Paul could offer ' mysteries ' or, to use our own word, ' sacraments,' far more impressive and convincing than their own. In place of the vague and shadowy man-god Horus, a being without place, time, or character, on whose resurrection they pinned the hope of their own resurrection and future salvation, he could offer Christ, who had lived and died within their own life-times ; whose resurrection had been acclaimed by His followers immediately after His death ; whose life and character was the evidence of His divinity and the pattern for His followers.

Thus marvellously was Christianity adapted to satisfying the craving of each of the three main religious types in the Gentile world. Thus marvellously did St. Paul, in his own words, " become all things to all men that perchance I might gain some." St. Paul himself speaks of the Law of the Jews as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. A century later Gentile converts were remarking that Greek philosophy was a schoolmaster to lead men to Christ. The mystery religions were schoolmasters also, for St. Paul brought into prominence just that element in Christianity which makes it (besides being

much else) the greatest of 'mystery' religions. To St. Peter, at his first preaching of the gospel, the one essential fact had been Christ's resurrection: it proved Him Messiah. The Crucifixion is thought of only as a 'defeat' that is wiped out by 'victory' that immediately follows it. St. Paul, however, seizes on the Crucifixion and shows it as no mere martyrdom. Christ sacrificed Himself to redeem us. This idea of redemption by sacrifice is, of course, familiar in every religion in which animals are sacrificed to secure Divine favour for man. The Christian doctrine of redemption through Christ grows naturally out of the doctrine of redemption through animal sacrifices. But the idea of the voluntary, human, self-sacrifice of the man-god, who bows before Death, only to rise again and break Death's fetters, not only for himself, but for all of us, is also the idea which the popular mystery religions were trying to express.

The Christians of Jerusalem had believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that He was speedily coming again to judge the world. This last belief was, as we know, a delusion. It is difficult to resist the impression that, had the faith of the first Apostles remained undeveloped, the failure of their forecast in the matter of the Second Coming would have discredited the whole movement. St. Paul started with his hopes set on a speedy Second Coming, as his earliest Epistle, *First Thessalonians*, shows, but he rapidly outgrew this belief. His emphasis is more and more on the Spirit of Christ indwelling in the soul of the believer. The 'resurrection of the dead' and the 'second coming' are no longer only or even mainly conceived as world-shattering occurrences in the sphere of external nature. There is a 'second coming' of Christ every time an unbeliever is converted and Christ enters his soul. There is a resurrection from the dead every time one who has lived in spiritual death for the sake of the things of this world, is 'born into life eternal' and enters the Kingdom which is 'on Earth as it is in Heaven.'[1]

[1] See for example Galatians ii. 19, 20, iv. 6; Colossians iii. 1.

And the most obvious feature of this Kingdom of Heaven on Earth seems to have been its cheerfulness. Whatever Christianity may have since become in the hands of some of its sectaries, it was not a ' kill-joy ' affair in the time of the Apostles, but very much the reverse. The words ' joy ' and ' rejoice ' occur over a hundred times in the New Testament. Nothing is so exhilarating as adventure, and these people felt they were out on a great spiritual adventure. Probably Christian smiles, and the Christian habit of laughing at misfortune, won more converts than Christian arguments.

It is worth while, perhaps, to add at this point a few lines concerning the personality of St. Paul. He is described, in a work[1] written sufficiently near his own time to be considered trustworthy, as short and bald, with a hook nose and shaggy brows. He suffered from some physical trouble which he calls a ' thorn in the flesh,' but its nature is quite unknown to us. He is sometimes described as short tempered and irascible, but there is really little evidence for this view. A man who accomplished so much and conciliated so many opponents from so many different camps, cannot have been wanting in tact, nor in personal charm. No doubt he was vehement, and occasionally failed to ' suffer fools gladly.' The men who plan and carry out achievements as vast as those of St. Paul cannot always afford time for compliments. He was ever a fighter, a fearless fighter, and an honourable fighter, and he bore the marks of his battles. Five times he received the maximum number of lashes from Jewish tribunals: three times he was scourged by the Romans, once stoned, and a day and a night he spent battling with the waves after a shipwreck. The whole impression is of a tireless energy, nourished by an unquenchable faith in Christ. He thinks of Christ not as a dead hero, nor even mainly as a God in the skies, but as something within himself.

[1] The so-called ' Acts of Paul,' written in Asia Minor about 150 A.D. The fact that, though the writer is an admirer, the description is unflattering, is in favour of its truthfulness.

Christ is within him and inspiring and guiding his work: one feels that St. Paul might have used words like those of the elder Pitt, and exclaimed, "I believe that I can save this Church and that no one else can—yet not I," he would have added, "but Christ working in me."

Yet St. Paul has not always been a popular character with modern men. Some writers, who love the Spirit of Christ but care not much for our Churches, feel that St. Paul was the first and worst of a long line of offenders who buried the simple teaching of Christ under a pile of obscure and useless theological doctrines. This is not really fair to St. Paul. His letters, it is true, are full of theological argument, and much of that argument is difficult for us to appreciate because our outlook on life is so different from that of those for whom St. Paul wrote. He is at his best for us when he is least theological, as in the thirteenth chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*. The prose poem in praise of Love in that chapter is as fresh to-day as when it was written, and is as fine as anything in Plato or in any prose writer that ever lived. As for his theological arguments, he lived in an age of theological speculation, and argument was one of his weapons. We should think of him not as a theologian but as a great man of action and leader of men, one who planned missionary enterprises as boldly and carried them through as heroically as any Alexander or Napoleon planned and executed his campaigns. "To the historian," writes Dr. Inge,[1] "there must always be something astounding in the magnitude of the task he set himself, and in his enormous success. The future history of the civilised world for two thousand years, perhaps for all time, was determined by his missionary journeys and his hurried writings. It is impossible to guess what would have become of Christianity if he had never lived; we cannot even be sure that the religion of Europe would be called by the name of Christ. That stupendous achievement seems to have been due to an almost

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 229.

unique practical insight into the essential factors of a very complex and difficult situation. We watch him, with breathless interest, steering the vessel which carried the Christian Church and its fortunes through a narrow channel full of sunken rocks and shoals. With unerring instinct he avoids them all and brings the ship, not into smooth water, but into the open sea, out of that perilous strait."

On the events of St. Paul's life following the third and last missionary journey we need not stop long. On his return to Jerusalem he was prosecuted by the Jews before the Roman governor, as was Our Lord before him. We do not discover what part the Christians of Jerusalem played in this affair. Probably they were too weak a body to accomplish anything of importance. They had decisively failed by this time to win any real hold on their fellow-citizens. Felix, the Roman governor, was of the type of Pilate rather than of Gallio and, since Paul was accused of 'teaching against the Law' and 'moving tumults among all the Jews throughout all the world,' it seemed the safe course to throw so troublesome a man into prison. Here Paul remained two years: then followed another trial, the appeal to Caesar—for St. Paul was a Roman citizen—and the journey to Rome.

At this point the narrative of the Acts terminates. Tradition tells that a few years later St. Paul suffered martyrdom in Nero's persecution of the Christians, probably about 65 A.D. It sufficed for St. Luke that the greatest of the Apostles had reached the capital of the world, a prisoner and fated to be, like his Master, a martyr. As an old commentator expressed it: "Paulus Romae, apex Evangelii, finis Actorum."

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPELS

(i) *The First Three Gospels*

THE Gospels are not the earliest writings of the New Testament. St. Paul's Epistles belong to the 'fifties' and 'sixties' of the first Christian century, and the dates within which the four gospels were written are about 70-110 A.D.

At first sight this seems odd. When a great man dies to-day the publication of a biography as soon as circumstances allow, may be taken as a matter of course. When the subject is the founder of a religion, surely the very first care of his disciples would be to secure for the Church a full and authoritative account of his life and teaching before memory dimmed and tradition became confused. It is not enough to say, as used to be said, that a written account was not needed seeing that the first Christians were His contemporaries and had known Him in the flesh. From the first Christianity spread widely among Hellenist Jews who had never so much as heard of Our Lord during His brief ministry.

The fact seems to be that the Church of the Apostles concerned itself very little with the past. Its eyes were fixed on the future. Christ's resurrection was much more important than His life, His Second Coming than His First. What was the need of a written record when the End of the World was close at hand? Thus we find St. Paul's Epistles are very little concerned with the incidents of Our Lord's earthly

life. There is never so much as an allusion to a single parable or miracle. For St. Paul and his Gentile converts the gospel is not the life of Christ, but the death and resurrection. Christ was God : He was crucified : He rose again, and those who believe in Him rise with Him and partake in His risen life. Nothing else mattered to them in comparison with this final fact.

But time passed on and the world did not come to an end. It became apparent that the Church would survive the Apostles, and that it had before it an earthly career of indefinite duration. In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Jewish State obliterated and the earthly setting of Our Lord's career passed away for ever. The Church was predominantly Gentile, and there was a real danger lest for the Gentile Christian this ' Son of God ' he worshipped might rapidly become as vague and unsubstantial a figure as any pagan deity, not a historical character but an item in a creed.

It was at this point that the Gospels came to the rescue of the Church.

St. Mark's Gospel is the earliest and the briefest, and all modern scholars agree that, from the purely historical point of view, it is the most valuable of the four. This gospel says nothing of Our Lord's miraculous birth : it begins with His baptism and plunges at once into a condensed but detailed and vivid narrative, consisting of brief parables, miracles, and fragments of discussion between Our Lord and His disciples or Our Lord and the Pharisees. Our Lord's humanity is emphasised at every turn ; His anger, annoyance or surprise are frankly described. It was probably written between 70 and 80 A.D. by John Mark, once the companion of St. Paul. There is also almost certainly truth in the ancient tradition that it is based on the personal reminiscences of St. Peter. Mark himself had lived in Jerusalem, and maybe he met Jesus for the first and last time on the eve of the Crucifixion, if indeed it is himself that he

describes in the curious passage (xiv. 51, 52) telling how ' a certain young man ' followed Jesus a short way after His betrayal, when all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled. The young man had nothing on but a linen cloth, and when people tried to arrest him he escaped by leaving the linen cloth in their hands and fleeing away naked into the darkness. This sounds like a personal reminiscence of the writer.

The first three gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels, because they ' look together ' or take the same point of view of Our Lord's life. But they are not really three independent witnesses, for St. Matthew and St. Luke both wrote with St. Mark's work before them, copying it extensively with such slight alterations as seemed good to them. These alterations generally take the form of abbreviations. Picturesque but unimportant details from St. Mark are omitted, and in general the two later evangelists suppress those phrases of St. Mark's which call attention to Our Lord's human emotions, His anger, surprise, and the like. St. Matthew and St. Luke also used another earlier source which has been lost, consisting of a collection of ' Logia ' or ' sayings ' of Our Lord. This lost document is sometimes called Q, from the German ' Quelle,' meaning ' source.' There is some reason for thinking that this collection, and not our first gospel, was the work of St. Matthew the Apostle.

St. Matthew's Gospel is not concerned to relate the *development* of Our Lord's teaching. St. Mark's work appears to be chronological in its general arrangement, but St. Matthew freely re-arranges his material in order to bring out what he finds to be the main features. After four chapters devoted to the birth, the baptism and the temptation, he proceeds at once to ' The Sermon on the Mount.' It is easy to see that this is not a sermon in the modern sense of the word but a collection of groups of sayings, brought together to illustrate the most characteristic feature of Our Lord's teaching, namely, the foundation of the Kingdom. The Beatitudes already quoted in brief (cf. p. 66) describe the tests of

citizenship ; and all that follows contrasts the Principles of the Kingdom with the Laws of Moses, the life and standards of the new society with the life and standards of the old. St. Matthew (as it is convenient to call the author) is writing principally for the Christians of Palestine. He has been described as a 'Christian Rabbi.'[1] The righteousness of the Christian must exceed the righteousness of the Jew, and those for whom the Law of Moses is superseded must be quite clear as to what has taken its place.

Being written primarily for Jewish converts the First Gospel is for us, in some of its aspects, less valuable than the others. St. Matthew insists, as the other gospels do not, on Our Lord's descent from King David, and on His fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy. With St. Matthew begins that rather mechanical handling of Old Testament texts, which can still sometimes be heard from modern pulpits. Allusion has already been made to this subject (cf. page 60 and footnote). It would be easy to go through St. Matthew's Gospel and with the knowledge at our disposal show that on this occasion and on that his quotations from the Old Testament reveal a misunderstanding of the passage he quotes. It is, therefore, all the more interesting to note that whenever St. Matthew represents Our Lord Himself as quoting from the Old Testament or using it as a basis of argument, the quotations are always given their true and original meaning. This affords very strong evidence that the words of Our Lord recorded in the Synoptic Gospels are a faithful reproduction of Our Lord's manner of teaching, and not merely the invention of the evangelists.[2]

[1] Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 190.

[2] An example may be given of the two types of Old Testament quotation. Our Lord quotes from Hosea vi. 6 the words, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' Our Lord gives the words exactly the meaning Hosea had intended them to bear, and his point is that His own teaching had, in this particular, been already anticipated by the first 'prophet of love' (see Part I. on Hosea). St. Matthew on the other hand, after recording the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt to escape from Herod the Great, adds, "That

St. Luke's Gospel is, it is generally agreed, the work of St. Paul's companion, and the author of the Acts. He uses the same material as St. Matthew and some further sources of his own. It is to him that we owe the longer and more dramatic parables, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, Dives and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the Publican. A feature of his Gospel is the emphasis he lays on the Christian virtue of poverty. Where St. Matthew writes "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," St. Luke writes simply "Blessed be ye poor; blessed are ye that hunger." There is about him, as about his master St. Paul, a tendency to asceticism. The End of the World now appeared to many to be indefinitely postponed. The Christian Churches maintained a precarious foothold, scattered over the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. Christians must learn to do without and to despise most of the tempting things the world had to offer. Perhaps St. Luke gives this side of Our Lord's teaching undue prominence. Our Lord Himself was so far from despising the simple pleasures of life that His enemies accused Him of being a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. He associated with the poor not so much because they were poor as because they were honest and free from pride and hypocrisy.

A marked feature of the Gentile Churches of the end of the first century was the honour paid to women. The Christians maintained a standard of purity and chivalry in private life such as no Greek or Roman community had ever known, and it is only where purity and chivalry prevail that the special gifts of womanhood can be recognised. St. Paul several times mentions women by name as among the most

it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the Prophet saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son." It is true these words or something like them occur in Hosea xi. 1, but Hosea is referring to the Exodus. We do not to-day believe that the prophets filled their works with sayings that were intended to convey their true meaning only to people who lived hundreds of years afterwards.

important members of the Churches to which his epistles are addressed. So St. Luke in his Gospel has a special tenderness for and interest in the women with whom Our Lord came in contact. To him we owe our picture of the Virgin Mary, of Anna the prophetess, of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, of the woman that wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair.

In conclusion, we may say that St. Mark's Gospel presents a plain historical outline; to it we are chiefly indebted for our knowledge of the external events of Our Lord's life. St. Matthew and St. Luke use that outline and add material that would be specially interesting to their own first readers. To St. Matthew we owe the clearest and fullest teaching about 'the Kingdom': to St. Luke we owe most of those stories, some parables and some not, which are the most human, the most touching, the most picturesque elements in the New Testament and portray, for most of us, the 'gentle Jesus' of whom we learnt at our mother's knee.

But the great merit of all these gospels alike is that in reading them we feel that we are reading the authentic words of Our Lord. We have no external proof of this, but the internal proof is irresistible. Nowhere else in early Christian literature do we find that inimitable style, so simple, so gracious, so subtle, so profound. St. Matthew loses it as soon as he begins to explain; St. Luke loses it as soon as he passes to the *Acts*. It is utterly alien to St. Paul. The only explanation is that, in spite of the forty years that had passed since Our Lord's Crucifixion, the gospels have caught the actual tones and phrases of His speech on earth. They have penetrated behind the Divine Redeemer to the Human Master.[1]

[1] A very interesting example of the way in which a disciple may recreate, many years after, the conversation of a beloved master may be quoted here. In 1920 Mr. Bruce Glasier published a book on William Morris, who died twenty-five years before. He writes: "I have found that my memory is, on many occasions, subject to what seems to be a sort of 'illumination' or 'inspiration.' Thus

(ii) *The Fourth Gospel.* The Fourth Gospel has inspired perhaps more devotion than any other book in the Bible. At the same time, its peculiarities raise some very difficult questions, and there is to-day no general agreement as to the answers to them. It is necessary to indicate briefly what those difficulties are, and then to offer what is at any rate a possible solution of them and an explanation of the position of this gospel in the history of the early Church.

We have already described, in Chapter V., the main features of Our Lord's Ministry as related by St. Mark, and, with certain differences noticed above, by St. Matthew and St. Luke. The scene of Our Lord's public ministry is Galilee: He teaches by means of parables and short, pithy sayings or 'proverbs,' and performs many miracles of healing: He preaches 'the Kingdom,' but carefully keeps in the background His own Messianic claims. Later He leaves Galilee from fear of Herod, and wanders with His chosen disciples in the country to the north and east of the Lake. At the end of this period they finally recognise Him as 'the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' Almost immediately afterwards He sets forth to Jerusalem. No other visit to Jerusalem is recorded, except the occasion described in St. Luke when His parents took Him to Jerusalem at the age of twelve. Four days after His triumphal entry He is arrested.

When we come to the Fourth Gospel we find the scene laid very largely in Jerusalem, where Our Lord celebrates at least one Passover previous to that which coincided with the Crucifixion. Though certain incidents, such as the Feeding of the Five Thousand, are common to all four gospels, the Fourth Gospel contains others that are entirely absent in the

when I have fixed my mind on one, say, of the incidents recalled in these chapters, the scene has begun to unfold itself, perhaps slowly at first, but afterwards rapidly and clearly. Meditating upon it for a time, I have lifted my pen and begun to write. Then, to my surprise, the conversations, long buried or hidden somewhere in my memory, have come back to me sometimes with the greatest fulness, word for word, as we say. Nay, not only the words, but the tones, the pauses, and the gestures of the speaker."

Synoptic Gospels. Some of these, such as the conversations with Nicodemus and the Woman of Samaria, present no difficulties, for the Synoptic Gospels do not profess to give complete biographies, and another independent writer would naturally make a different choice of incidents. But the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus presents a different problem. It is hard to believe that the Synoptics could have passed over so unique and astounding a ' sign '—to use St. John's word—had they known of it.

Then again, the style of Our Lord's teaching is very different in the Fourth Gospel. The simple parables, the direct, pithy sayings, are for the most part replaced by highly abstract, spiritual, and often difficult discourses. In the Synoptics Our Lord hardly alludes at all to His own claims, and does not admit His Messiahship till close on the end of the Ministry. In the Fourth Gospel He claims from the first the titles of Son of God and Son of Man, and bases His whole teaching on these claims. Take as an example of this contrast the two accounts of Our Lord's words on the occasion when He healed a man on the Sabbath day. In St. Mark's account (Mark iii. 4) before healing the man He challenged the Pharisees, " Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil? To save life or to kill? " No conversation after the healing is recorded. In St. John's account (John v. 17 onwards), Jesus said, after the man was healed, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work . . . Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for whatsoever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," and so on through twenty-five more verses.

Now the *easiest* solution of these difficulties, at first sight,

is to suppose that the Fourth Gospel is simply a religious romance; that its author had had no personal knowledge of Christ on earth but expressed, in the form of an imaginary biography with imaginary discourses, what he found to be the essential truths of Christianity. In favour of this view is the fact that the Gospel cannot have been written earlier than about 100 A.D., and any companion of Our Lord on earth must at that date have been an extremely old man. Many such religious romances, of which fragments survive, were indeed written in the second century. They are for the most part very inferior works and are known as the Apocryphal Gospels. Some of them bear the names of apostles: there is, for example, a 'Gospel of St. Peter,' which was certainly not written by that Apostle.

All lovers of the Fourth Gospel would be very sorry if compelled to accept this view. If, however, the balance of evidence as revealed by the scholars inclined with overwhelming force in favour of it, we should have to accept it or behave like the 'deaf adder that stoppeth her ears,'—not a good model for Christian imitation. As it happens, however, there is strong evidence on the other side, though it is not easy to state it in a few words. Roughly speaking it amounts to this. Though writing thirty or forty years after Jerusalem had been destroyed and all its religious ceremonies had become a matter of ancient and unimportant history, the writer shows an accurate knowledge of them which, since it contributes nothing to the main purpose of his work, would be almost inconceivable in a writer who was not a Jew familiar with the old Jerusalem. Notice, again, such a verse as the following: "It was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the Temple in Solomon's Porch" (John x. 22, 23). Here is no *proof*; but the more such a verse is considered, the less does it look like the work of a mere religious romancer; it bears all the marks of an odd scrap of distant but distinct recollection, connecting a particular discourse with a certain locality, a

certain Feast day, and a certain type of weather, even though neither the locality, the Feast day, nor the weather are in themselves matters of importance.

It seems probable, then, that the Gospel is either the work of an eye-witness, or of some writer of the next generation who was in close personal touch with an eye-witness, and used the material afforded by the eye-witness's conversation or notes. The date of the Gospel (100-110 A.D.) makes the second alternative the more probable, but the choice between them is really unimportant. In either case we have as our authority a ' disciple whom Jesus loved.'

There is no figure in early Christian history that makes quite the same appeal to the devout imagination as this mysterious ' St. John,' who, unlike St. Peter and St. Paul, passes at once from the sphere of history to the sphere of legend. The early Church told of his exile to the barren island of Patmos in the Aegean, and of his old age in Ephesus. He had lived to old age, pondering over Our Lord's teaching until he had made it his own and could no longer express it in any words but those which came natural to his own ripe experience. In any case, the writer of the gospel makes no attempt to translate these discourses back into the language of Christ as we know it in the Synoptics. " The old disciple needs no documents. . . . The whole is present to his memory, shaped by years of reflection, illuminated by the experience of a life-time. He knows Christ now far better than he knew Him in Galilee or Jerusalem." [1]

We pass to the question—what was the special purpose of this gospel ?

We have seen how the Church started with the idea that the Messiah would soon return again in glory to judge the world ; that Christ would fulfil at least this part of the current Jewish expectations even though His life on earth had in other respects so little conformed with their Messianic

[1] J. A. Robinson, *The Study of the Gospels*, p. 148, quoted by **Burkitt**, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 230.

programme. St. Mark's Gospel, just because it is so wonderfully faithful a historical sketch, is coloured throughout with this idea. St. Matthew and St. Luke copy St. Mark, and where they differ from him they tend to tone down and weaken the vividness of St. Mark's delineation of Our Lord's human character from reverence for His divinity. Here they are, in a sense, disciples of St. Paul, who presents Christ to his Gentile converts primarily as a mystic Redeemer indwelling in the human heart, and, if we may trust the evidence of the Epistles, emphasises His death and resurrection rather than the human aspects of His life. Hence there was a danger—and as the next chapter will show, a very real danger—that Christ should come to be regarded with the lapse of years and the death of all who had known Him in the flesh, as a mere mystical 'demi-god.' We have a curious piece of evidence of this danger in the fact, which seems established, that the First and Third Gospels rapidly became more popular than St. Mark's.

It was to combat this tendency that St. John wrote. Even more than St. Mark, he emphasises Christ's humanity, even His human weaknesses of the flesh.[1] At Jacob's Well He was tired and asked for water (John iv. 6); He wept at the tomb of Lazarus (xi. 35); even on the Cross, He said, "I thirst" (xix. 28). It is to St. John alone that we owe these details. And yet—let there be no mistake. This Human is also Divine, and of a divinity more august than even the early Church realised; no mere *temporal* Messiah; no mere *future* Judge. Christ was God before the world was created, and will be so to the end. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," he says; "I and the Father are One."

St. John sums up the whole idea of his Gospel in a kind of preface or prologue, which may also be regarded as an epilogue or summing up of the whole matter. "In the beginning," he writes (i. 1-4), "was the Word, and the Word

[1] Here, and in what follows, I am specially indebted to Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 233-244.

was with God, and the Word was God . . . All things were made by him . . . In him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men." This term 'Word'—'Logos' in Greek—was a very convenient one for the purpose, since it was familiar in a religious use both to Jew and to Gentile. The Stoics and other philosophers used to speak of the 'Spermaticos Logos,' the Seed-bearing Word, as the agency through which God communicated with man. On the other hand, the Old Testament contains several passages in which 'the word' stands for God's power manifest on earth. "He sendeth his word and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions" (Psalms, cvii. 20). "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah, xl. 8).

Mark, then, the next step. "And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The Church has cherished the Fourth Gospel because it most emphatically expressed the general conviction of the Church, that Christ was both Man and God. St. Mark gives us the Jesus of History, St. John the Christ of Christian experience. If we refuse to believe that the Apostles were, after Christ's Crucifixion, guided by the Holy Spirit, then no doubt the Christ of St. John is a product of human delusion. If, however, we believe that they were so guided, then the Christ of St. John is as truly the revelation of Christ in the year 100 as the Christ of St. Mark is the revelation of Christ in the year 30, as preserved by human memory and recorded forty years later.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE

WHEN we pass from the first century of the Christian Era to the second, third, and fourth centuries, we cannot help being rather disappointed. St. Paul and the Gospels have led us to expect something better than we actually get. This inferiority is most pronounced when we fix our attention, as we shall do in this chapter, on some of the leaders. It was an age of small men, in the Pagan as well as the Christian world. One is tempted to wonder how it would have been had a man of the calibre of Aeschylus or Plato, of Jeremiah or St. Paul, arisen in the Church during these centuries. But it was not to be. We shall see the brighter side of the picture in the following chapter when we consider the quality of the Christian community as a whole, their heroism under persecution, and the tributes of unwilling admiration that not only countless brave deaths but countless virtuous lives extorted from their persecutors.

Donald Hankey states the case in his usual trenchant way[1]: "A lot of second rate philosophers, who had hitherto confined their attentions chiefly to the Greek philosophies and Oriental religions, started to explain Christianity. They were generally not very good Christians, and just looked upon the faith as an intellectual problem. . . . If the Christians had been wise they would have stuck to their guns and said, 'We can't know all about God. We can only know what God has

[1] Hankey, *The Lord of All Good Life*, pp. 112, 113.

chosen to tell us. We know that so much is true and if you try to work it out in practice you will find that it is true. But exactly how it ought to be put philosophically we neither know nor care.' Unfortunately the Christians tried to argue, with the result that they argued for about 200 years. . . . Meanwhile the faith had got tied up in little fifth century boxes like our Athanasian Creed. We have never stopped making dogmas and arguing about them."

This is all very well, but the attitude Donald Hankey recommends to the Christians is impossible, and it is to the credit of the human mind that it is so. We have got to try and be philosophers, to try to state our experience of life in terms that satisfy our intellects. It is unfortunate that most of us cannot hope to be more than 'second-rate' philosophers, but that fact does not condemn philosophy.

As a continuous history of the Christian thought of this period might become somewhat long and wearisome, I have contented myself with taking a few representative men and movements.

(i) *The heretic Marcion* (*about* 100-160). Marcion was born a Christian, being the son of the bishop of Sinope, a port on the southern coast of the Black Sea. After studying the Epistles of St. Paul and the Gospel according to St. Luke—for there was at this time no 'New Testament'—he passed to the study of the Old Testament and being repelled by the vindictive and 'jealous' God depicted in many of its chapters, came to the conclusion that the God who was the Father of Christ could not possibly be the God of the Jews. In other words he sought to cut all connections between Christianity and Israel, or, as we might say, between Part II. and Part I. of this book. He seems to have put it somewhat as follows. There are two Gods, the God of the Law, who stands for Justice, and the God of Christ, who stands for Mercy. "Jesus, the Son of God, appeared on earth, doing good without reward and healing those who for their sins

were sick, until at last the God of the Law was jealous ; and the God of the Law stirred up his servants and they took Jesus and crucified Him, and He became like the dead, so that Hell opened her mouth and received Him. But Death could have no dominion over Jesus, nor could Hell retain one who was alive within its bounds. Jesus therefore burst the bonds of Hell and ascended to His Father, carrying with Him the spirits that lay there in prison. Then Jesus came down in His glory and appeared before the God of the Law, who was obliged to confess that he was guilty according to his own Law ; for Jesus had only done good to the race of men and yet he had been crucified. ' I was ignorant,' said the God of the Law to Jesus, ' and because I sinned and killed thee in ignorance, there shall be given to thee in revenge all those who shall be willing to believe in thee, to carry away wherever thou wilt.' Then Jesus left the God of the Law and betook himself to Paul, and revealed this to him and sent him to preach that we have all been bought with a price. All who believe in Jesus were then and there sold from dominion of the Just Power to the Good and Kind One." [1]

Marcion is here attempting to explain the very difficult problem of the Atonement. Why was it that God the Son had to suffer in order to fulfil the purposes of God the Father ? We can only answer the question by saying that God the Son and God the Father are, though two ' persons ' (*i.e.* aspects or manifestations) One God, and that God's agony on the Cross is only a manifestation on earth of God's eternal suffering for the sins of his children. This is the answer of the Church.

Marcion also taught that Christ was not Human except in outward appearance. He was a new God, suddenly emerging upon a world that had not hitherto known Him.

Marcion was a very earnest and virtuous man, but there is no doubt that the Church did well to reject his view of

[1] Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 297, on which the whole of the present section is based.

Christianity. The orthodox doctrine of the Humanity of Christ is the secret of the optimism of our religion. If Christ has taken on Him our flesh, then the body, rightly used, is a glory. In denying Christ's humanity Marcion went near asserting that Matter, or the Body, is necessarily evil. This leads straight to all those views which preach mere asceticism, mere refraining from the harmless pleasures and business of life, as a virtue in itself. Again, Marcion's rejection of the religious progress of Israel as the earthly basis of Christianity is contrary to all that scientific history has taught us about the origin and growth of religions. If in one aspect religion is a Divine revelation, it is equally truly a product of human effort. Modern missionary work has done more than anything else to impress this on us. Christianity cannot start *in vacuo*, in a void. As in Africa to-day, so also in Judaea and in the Roman Empire nineteen hundred years ago, it could only build on the foundations already laid for it. The Church has believed, and surely consistently, that God laid those foundations just as truly as He ordained the superstructure. This Marcion denied.

The Marcionite Church survived until the fourth century, when Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the Emperors. Then, sad to say, the orthodox, having learnt nothing from their own persecutions, turned and rent the Marcionites (as all other Christian heretics) and, accusing them of every horrible crime that a diseased imagination could suggest, wiped them off the face of the earth.

In one other respect Marcion is curiously important. As he was the first Christian to reject the Old Testament as a Divine revelation, so he was the first to compile a New Testament of Sacred Scriptures. His 'New Testament' seems to have consisted of St. Luke's Gospel, out of which he cut certain passages that conflicted with his views, and of ten Epistles of St. Paul, which he diligently collected on his travels. To these he wrote brief introductions which were long afterwards, when their authorship was forgotten,

placed at the head of each epistle in the Vulgate, the Latin Bible of the Church (cf. p. 152). Marcion's New Testament is the basis of the New Testament as we have it to-day. To him we almost certainly owe the great preponderance of St. Paul's Epistles in the latter part of the book.

(ii) *Clement of Alexandria* (*about* 150-212) *and Origen* (*about* 185-254). Clement and Origen are important in the history of the Church because they were the first writers to attempt to clothe Christianity in the dress of a Greek philosophical system. Both were essentially learned men, of the type of University professors, in an age when learning was revolving on an immovable axis rather than progressing from discovery to discovery as it had been progressing in the days of Socrates and is again to-day. Clement was born a pagan, and the facts of his conversion are unknown. He became head of a Christian school in Alexandria, which ever since Alexander's day had been the leading centre of learning in the Mediterranean world. Origen was his most distinguished pupil, and indeed the greater mind of the two. Origen in fact was so steeped in Greek philosophy that he was ultimately regarded as a heretic, and the Church refused him the honour of canonisation. So, unlike many lesser men, he is not a 'Saint' of the Roman Church. Clement became a 'Saint' and long remained so, but an eighteenth century Pope came to the conclusion that his views on the Incarnation, that is, the miraculous birth, of Our Lord were unsound, and struck him off the list. Both were men of immense industry and blameless life.

Clement held the view, with which the modern thinker strongly sympathises, that God had through the ages been preparing not only Israel but also the whole world for the coming of Christianity. St. Paul had said that the Law was a 'schoolmaster' leading us to Christ. Clement adds that Greek philosophy was also such a schoolmaster. If God sent Moses, He also sent Plato. Unfortunately he some-

times combines this view—and he is a most haphazard and inconsistent writer—with the impossible theory that all that was valuable in the Greek philosophers had been borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. This theory he carried to an absurd point. Not content with finding traces of the Old Testament in Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes he asserts that Miltiades won the battle of Marathon by imitating the tactics of one of the battles of Moses. This theory that the classical Greeks borrowed from the Old Testament can be traced as late as the eighteenth century, and was propounded by an English clergyman named Waterland in 1731.[1]

Clement adopts from St. John the term Logos (Word) as symbolising Christ, but, whereas in St. John the Logos is God's power, in Clement it is Divine Wisdom or Reason. Clement exalts Reason as the highest Christian virtue. He says true religion begins in Faith; its second stage is Love; its final perfection is Reason. Christianity in fact is simply the greatest of philosophies. In the human and historical Jesus he seems little interested.

Origen's mind moved in the same channels. He wrote voluminous commentaries on books of the Old and New Testaments and was much addicted, like all Christian writers of his period, to a very dangerous intellectual exercise, namely the search for allegorical meanings. Clement did the same. He takes for instance that miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand and finds that the five barley loaves stand for the Jewish Law ("for barley is sooner ripe for harvest than wheat") and the fishes for Greek philosophy, "born and moving among Gentile billows."[2] This allegorising habit, being based on an uncritical devotion to the mere words of Scripture, infected the teaching of the Church down to quite modern times. In fact, we owe our freedom from it to-day entirely to the modern scientific and historical spirit.

The most interesting work of Origen is one in which he

[1] Lecky, *History of Morals*, vol. i. 345.
[2] Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 277.

refutes an anti-Christian writer named Celsus. Fortunately he quotes his adversary very fully, and thereby enables us to see the grounds on which an intelligent and honest adversary attacked the Faith at the end of the second century. The case of Celsus against Christianity can be reduced to three points.

First, he says that the idea of God taking human form is degrading and ignoble: the very idea of the crucifixion is repulsive to him, and he suggests that Jesus, to prove his Godhead, ought to have vanished from off the cross before the eyes of his enemies. This is as much as to say that Our Lord ought to have yielded to the Temptation in the Wilderness. It proves that Celsus simply did not understand the spirit of the religion he was criticising.

His second point is that the Christian writers, by allegorising their Scriptures, defy common-sense. Here we may admit that Celsus was right.

But his main charge against the Christians is that they were what we to-day should call anarchists, in that they refused to accord the customary formal worship to the Emperor. He writes, "If all men were to do as you do, nothing will prevent the Emperor from being left deserted, and all things on earth falling into the power of the most lawless and barbarous savages, with the result that neither of your religion nor of the true wisdom would there be left among men so much as the name."[1] This is very shrewd criticism, and it is interesting to notice that the danger from the Barbarians was realised as early as this: Celsus wrote about 180 A.D. In the course of the next century and a half it did indeed become clear that the Roman Empire must either accept Christianity as its official religion or perish from the combined hostility of the Christians within and the Barbarians without. This supreme fact was realised by Constantine, the last great statesman of the Ancient World (see p. 122). Even then the Roman Empire was not saved, but Celsus would have been surprised indeed and perhaps partly consoled

[1] Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, p. 256.

could he have realised that a new 'Roman Empire,' the Christian Papacy, would build up a great civilising power on its ruins and in the fulness of time, in 800 A.D., crown the greatest of the Barbarians, Charlemagne, as the founder of a new line of 'Roman Emperors'—*Carolus Augustus, a Deo coronatus.*

One last point may be noted. Celsus does not, like many inferior enemies of the early Christians, accuse them of practising abominable vices. There has always been a tendency in men to impute immoral habits to those with whom they disagree on religious grounds, and the Christian sects have been as bad offenders here as any pagan. That Celsus refrained shows him to have been an honourable man.

(iii) *The Arian Controversy and the Nicene Creed* (318-599). We have already seen how Marcion found it impossible to regard Jehovah, the Jewish God of the Law, as the God whom Christ called Father. One hundred and fifty years after his death another heresy arose, the Arian heresy, which was in reality Marcionism in a more subtle and complicated form. Its author was Arius, a priest of Alexandria, but his personal importance is quite dwarfed by the immensity of the controversy he set going, which shook the Church to its foundations.

Arius, like many others who combined a belief in Christ with an affection for Greek philosophy, was troubled by the thought that, if Christ was God and the Father also God, then there were two Gods and Christianity was a form of polytheism. He did not therefore assert that Christ was mere man; he allowed Christ every conceivable honour short of Godhead: He was a special and divine creation of God, a Son of God, a 'demigod' if you will, but no more. God remains supreme and apart, unknowable, the God of the Greek philosophers.

The effect of such a view would be to strike at the very roots of Christianity as we understand it. By asserting that Christ is God, Christianity also asserts that God is Christlike. The Supreme Creator and Ruler of the Universe is, in the

human sense, not unknowable but *good*. He loves His Creation and desires its happiness. If once the thinnest thin end of a wedge is driven between God and Christ, if once the equation, so to speak, is tampered with, the Supreme Creator and Ruler drifts away and becomes a cold abstraction, and Christ figures as a heroic rebel, perfect in goodness, but not perfect in power.

The easiest way for the modern reader, unskilled in theology, to get at the root idea of Arianism is to study it in a modern equivalent. Mr. Wells may fairly be called a modern Arian, and his book, *God the Invisible King*, an Arian Confession of faith. He sharply contrasts the Creator God, whom he calls the 'Veiled Being,' and the Redeemer God (or Christ),[1] whom he calls 'God the Invisible King.' The attempt of Christianity to get these two different ideas of God into one focus, to make the God of Nature a loving God, accessible to prayer, and the God of the Heart an all-powerful God:—this attempt, he says, has failed. Of the Veiled Being—'Fate,' if you will—man can know nothing. His sole concern is with God the Invisible King, the Good God who strives with man's own strivings, and leads him in his eternal warfare with evil.[2]

This is an attractive creed, but it will not stand examination. A God who is not Almighty is to the modern mind simply not a god at all. The worship of this Invisible King is merely sentimental hero-worship offered to a dead or non-existent hero.

The great champion of Christianity against the Arians was Athanasius, also an Alexandrian. Athanasius bears a bad name as the author of the complicated and unattractive Creed

[1] Mr. Wells does not himself identify the Redeemer God with Christ, but he expresses sympathy with those who do so.

[2] The Prometheus legend offers an example of the Arian type of religion. Prometheus the demigod friend of man defies Zeus the all-powerful tyrant of the Universe, and suffers for his heroic efforts on man's behalf. Shelley in his *Prometheus Unbound* shows himself a kind of Arian.

which many reformers would like to exclude from the Anglican Prayer Book. In a sense Athanasius does not deserve this unpopularity, for the creed in question was not written till long after his death. None the less, it must be admitted that its rigid definitions and fierce denunciations (" except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved ") are typical of its reputed author. Athanasius was a fierce fighter for the faith, heroic but ruthless.

The controversy was already in full blaze when the Emperor Constantine, who had already made himself the champion of Christianity, won the victory over his rivals which made him supreme throughout the Empire (323). Constantine valued Christianity as a moral force which, properly guided by a Christian Emperor, should make for unity and patriotism. A Christianity divided against itself was totally useless for his purpose. So he summoned the first General Council of the Church at Nicaea, on the south side of the Sea of Marmora, about fifty miles over the water from his new capital, Constantinople. No doubt Constantine was neutral as between the rival theologians. His one aim was to secure a united front.

The main business of the Council was to agree on a creed that should be henceforth a universal test of orthodoxy. Hitherto there had been no common creed. The churches of the various cities and provinces had each gone their own way and only interfered with each other's beliefs and practices when some particular church attracted attention by straying over-far from the normal and customary. Most churches had evolved from themselves very simple tests of admission, such as a declaration of belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, without further definition.

About three hundred bishops from every province of the Empire attended at Nicaea in 325. Constantine presided. Arianism was condemned by a large majority. Then Eusebius, famous afterwards as the first historian of the Church, put forward for general acceptance the creed of Caesarea, a vague, comprehensive, popular document, easily

understood by the simple, but equally liable to diverse interpretations by the learned. This was clearly useless as an instrument for defining orthodox doctrine, and so the party, of which Athanasius afterwards became the leader, proposed and carried, with the emperor's approval, a series of amendments which transformed the creed of Caesarea into a rigid and complex statement, which henceforth became the banner of orthodoxy. This is not the so-called Nicene Creed of the Anglican Prayer Book. Both that Creed and the so-called Apostles' Creed were unofficial documents composed later in the same century. The true Nicene Creed deserves quotation, though it is not possible here to explain the precise bearing of all its clauses. It is as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of all things, both visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God,
begotten of the Father, and only-begotten—
that is from the essence of the Father—
God from God
Light from Light
true God from true God
begotten not made,
being of one essence with the Father;
by whom all things were made,
both things in heaven and things on earth:
who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh,
was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day
ascended into heaven,
cometh to judge quick and dead;
And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say that
'there was once when he was not' and
'before he was begotten he was not,' and
'he was made of things that were not'
or maintain that the Son of God is of a different essence
or created, or subject to mortal change or alteration,
—these doth the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematise.[1]

[1] Quoted from H. M. Gwatkin, *The Arian Controversy*, p. 29.

The acceptance of this creed and the conclusion of the Council settled nothing. The majority, who had unwillingly accepted it, quickly abandoned it, and a most undignified war of words ensued and lasted for more than half a century. Arius himself soon died, but Athanasius, who must have been a young man at the time of the Council of Nicaea, lived on another fifty years, incessantly at war with the conservative and the unstable. Five times he was exiled by Roman Emperors in the vain hope that his removal would ensure peace.

At length—about 380 A.D.—Arianism was defeated in the Greek world, and it never got much hold in the Latin west. Meanwhile, however, the Goths and other Barbarians, already engaged in breaking up the Empire, had been converted to the Arian form of the faith. The Arian missionary Ulfilas produced the first translation of the Bible in a Teutonic language in about 360.[1] Thus the Arian-Athanasian controversy merged in the struggle between Roman and Teuton. The last barbarian invaders to abandon Arianism and accept orthodoxy were the Lombards of Italy, and their conversion was the work of the celebrated Pope Gregory the Great who sent Augustine to England. The Lombards renounced Arianism in 599, two years after the beginning of the conversion of Saxon England.

[1] Recent research has thrown doubt on the existence of the Bible of Ulfilas, but not, of course, on the Arian missionary achievements.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY OVER PAGANISM

(i) *The Spread of Christianity.*

IT has already been shown in Chapter VI. how well prepared in advance was the soil of the Gentile world for the sowing of the seed of Christianity. That world had lost its simple polytheistic faiths, and neither philosophy nor the oriental mystery religions proved an adequate substitute. On all sides and to a degree unparalleled in history, we find men who were no longer satisfied with old religions, and were yet thirsting for belief, passionately and restlessly seeking for something new.

At such a moment as this Christianity gained its ascendency; for none of its rivals combined so many distinct elements of power and attraction. Unlike the Jewish religion, it was bound by no local ties or theories of racial privileges. Unlike Stoicism, it offered all the charms of a picturesque ritual and all the securities of a fixed creed. Unlike the oriental mystery religions, it upheld a pure and noble rule of conduct and proved itself capable of inspiring heroic endurance and self-sacrifice. Its keynote was brotherly love. To the woman it offered respect and chivalry, to the slave equality with the freeman in God's eyes and an eternity of freedom beyond the grave.

"But Christianity was not merely a moral influence, or a system of opinions, or an historical record, or a collection

of wonder-working men ; it was also a Church, an institution definitely, elaborately and skilfully organised, possessing a weight and a stability which isolated teachers could never rival, and evoking to a degree before unexampled in the world, an enthusiastic devotion like that of the patriot for his country. The many forms of Pagan worship were pliant in their nature. Each offered certain advantages, but there was no reason why all should not exist together, nor why worshippers should not divide their attentions between two or more religions. But Christianity was emphatically exclusive ; its adherent was bound to detest and abjure the faiths around him as the workmanship of demons, and to consider himself placed in the world to destroy them. Hence there sprang a stern, aggressive, and, at the same time, disciplined enthusiasm, wholly unlike any other that had been witnessed upon earth. The duties of public worship, and the sacraments which were represented as the oaths of the Christian warrior, both served to strengthen this. Above all, the doctrine of salvation by belief, which then for the first time flashed upon the world ; the persuasion, realised with all the vividness of novelty, that Christianity opened out to its votaries eternal happiness, while all beyond its pale were doomed to an eternity of torture, supplied a motive of action as powerful as it is perhaps possible to conceive. It struck alike the coarsest chords of hope and fear, and the finest chords of compassion and love."[1]

As will be shown in the next section, the persecutions of the Christians were not in any case sufficiently prolonged or widespread to endanger the cause. Such as they were they seem to have had the opposite effect. Men and women enthusiastically sought martyrdom as a sacrament, a 'second baptism,' a means of forgiveness of sins and a secure passage to heaven. Ignatius of Antioch, one of the most notable of the second century martyrs, speaks of himself as 'the

[1] Lecky, *History of European Morals* (vol. i. p. 389), on which much of this chapter is based.

wheat of God,' longing for the day when he should be 'ground by the teeth of wild beasts into the pure bread of Christ.'

(ii) *The Persecutions.* Whatever the defects of Paganism, it is generally free from the spirit of intolerance and persecution. On the whole there existed in the Roman Empire a freedom of intellectual enquiry and discussion such as was not seen again in Europe until the eighteenth century or even the nineteenth. It is therefore interesting to notice why an exception was made in the case of Christianity.

If we could have interrogated one of the persecuting emperors and asked him why he treated Christianity with an intolerance not meted out to any other form of religion, he would probably have replied that it was the Christians themselves who first introduced the spirit of intolerance. The Christians alone, he would have said, denounce all other religions as the worship of demons, and miss no opportunity of insulting them. This was true enough. The progress of Christianity threatened, and the triumph of Christianity extinguished, that intellectual freedom which had been the finest feature of the ancient world. No doubt Christianity has to-day learnt the lesson of toleration, and thereby drawn nearer to the spirit alike of Christ and of Socrates, but it was many centuries in learning it. The Roman emperors might reasonably have said that it was as champions of toleration that they refused to tolerate the one intolerant sect.[1]

Closely connected with their intolerance was another characteristic of the Christians, specially detestable to the philosophers. They terrorised the human mind by threats

[1] The best contemporary evidence for the official attitude of the Roman Government early in the second century is the correspondence that passed between Pliny as governor of Bythinia in Asia Minor and the Emperor Trajan. It displays the reluctant and high-principled spirit in which persecution was undertaken. A full paraphrase of the correspondence will be found in the article "Pliny the Younger" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

of eternal torture after death. Against such practices the good Emperor Marcus Aurelius made a decree saying, "if anyone shall do anything whereby the weak minds of any may be terrified by superstitious fear the offender shall be exiled to an island." [1]

Then again the special appeal of Christianity to women made it odious to a society based on the absolute supremacy of the 'paterfamilias.' The Christians would get hold of the women and the slaves; these would get hold of the children; and the master would find himself isolated in his own establishment, estranged from his own family. Plutarch, the great moralist and biographer, may be referring to the Christians of about 100 A.D. when he writes: "A wife should have no friends but those of her husband; and as the gods are the first of friends, she should know no gods but those whom her husband adores. Let her shut the door then against idle religions and foreign superstitions. No god can take pleasure in sacrifices offered by a wife without the knowledge of her husband."

Lastly, on political grounds, the case against Christianity from the Roman point of view was very strong, as has been already noticed (see p. 119). The Church was a vast, highly organised society, entirely separate from and in many respects hostile to the government, and claiming from its members an absolute obedience. No doubt it was difficult to bring home against the Church any particular charges of treason. The Christians as a rule were conspicuously law-abiding, sober, moral, and industrious. None the less it was true that they regarded the Empire as a temporary, and at bottom an evil, institution, and looked forward dimly to some great future event which would bring about the overthrow of the Empire and the establishment of 'the Kingdom' in its place.[2]

[1] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i. p. 422.

[2] In fact, from the political point of view, the Roman Emperors must have regarded the Church much as many Conservatives to-day

Such were the causes of the persecutions. Christians were persecuted, not because they were a new sect, nor because they refused to offer worship to the Emperors (for the Jews also refused and were left unmolested), but because Christianity possessed certain unique and, to the Roman Empire, intolerable features.

The persecutions, however, though cruel while they lasted, were not such as to interfere seriously with the growth of the Church.

The first persecution occurred in the reign of Nero, and probably involved the martyrdom of both St. Peter and St. Paul. It was, however, confined to the capital. The date of Nero's persecution is between 64 and 68 A.D., and but for a very brief and obscure persecution in 95 under Domitian, the Christians were unmolested by the central government until the year 176, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. No doubt they suffered during the long period from occasional local attacks, at the hands either of city mobs or provincial governors. An occasional bishop, too, possibly from active desire for martyrdom, might provoke the authorities to destroy him. Such was Ignatius of Antioch already referred to, who was for reasons now unknown brought to Rome and thrown to the wild beasts in the reign of Trajan (about 110 A.D.). But until 176 there was no consistent persecution of Christians, and for the most part they lived entirely unmolested.

During the last four years of Marcus Aurelius (176-180)

regard the Trade Union organisation. Like the Church, the Trade Unions constitute a vast, highly organised society, separate from and in many respects hostile to the government, and claiming from their members absolute obedience (within the industrial sphere). Similarly many, though not all, Trade Unionists regard the State, as at present organised on a basis of capitalism, as a temporary and at bottom evil institution, and look forward to some form of revolution which will result in the establishment of Socialism. The parallel is a curious one. My object in indicating it is not to suggest any conclusions about modern Labour movements, but to help the reader to see how the Church would appear, at any time between 200 and 300 A.D., to a Roman statesman.

severe persecutions took place in several provinces of the Empire. On his death, however, a period of seventy years intervened, during which the Christians were again for the most part unharassed (180-249). One Emperor in this period, Alexander Severus, warmly supported them; it is said that he intended to build temples in honour of Christ but was dissuaded by the priests, who said that all the other temples would be deserted; so he contented himself with putting up statues of Abraham, Orpheus, and Christ in his private chapel.

By the middle of the third century the Church had assumed vast proportions, and now for the first time arose an Emperor, Decius, who, filled with the idea of restoring the spirit of ancient Roman discipline, set himself to exterminate Christianity. The Decian persecution was, no doubt, the severest the Church had yet endured, but it was soon terminated by the death of Decius (249-251), and only once was his policy whole-heartedly revived. This was the last and worst persecution, that of Diocletian (303-305). Almost immediately afterwards Constantine ascended the throne, and Christianity, still probably the religion of a minority, became the religion of the Emperor.

It is impossible to estimate with any kind of accuracy the number of the Christian victims of these pagan persecutions, but they were probably fewer than the sixteenth century Protestant victims of Spanish persecution in the Netherlands alone, and compared with the amount of destruction that Christian sects in general have inflicted on one another in the name of Christ, they sink into insignificance.

How did persecution affect the spirit of the Church? Persecution affects a Church very much as war affects a nation. It is indeed a kind of warfare in which all the aggressive violence is on one side and all the passive endurance on the other. We are concerned here only with its effect on the persecuted. Persecution, like war, calls forth countless displays of almost incredible heroism. It

would be easy, but it is unnecessary, to fill page after page with such tales of heroism, from that of the aged Polycarp, bishop of Ephesus, to that of Perpetua, the young mother of a three days old baby. Like soldiers they were fortified by a confidence that they died in a righteous cause, and that their deaths served the cause. Nay, more, like some soldiers of old, such as the Crusaders or the soldiers of Islam, they believed that their deaths ensured them an immortality of perfect bliss. But, as in war, there is a danger of emphasising too exclusively the good effects at the expense of the evil. Persecution, beyond doubt, bred in all but the greatest a spirit of bitterness and revenge which is far from the spirit of Christ. We see these evil effects in the way in which, when the Christians themselves got the upper hand, they turned upon their own heretics and upon the pagans the evil instruments that had been used against themselves.

No one displays the evil effects of persecution more clearly than Tertullian (about 150-220), the first great Christian writer in Latin. In a celebrated passage he gloats over the prospect of revenge beyond the grave. "You are fond of spectacles," he writes, "expect the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment of the universe. How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, and fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings," etc. The anti-Christian historian Gibbon[1] quotes this passage in mockery and derision of the early Christians. It seems, however, a case where only those who have themselves been through persecutions are entitled to throw the stone. But

[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xv.

one may note, without mockery, that it is a far cry from Tertullian to Christ's "Love your enemies: pray for them that persecute you."

(iii) *Constantine, Julian, and Theodosius* (306-395). The Emperor Diocletian, the last persecuting emperor, had made the experiment of dividing the unwieldy Roman Empire into four governments, each with its own semi-independent emperor. This only led to civil wars; and Constantine (306-337), being proclaimed Emperor by his troops in Britain, worked his way eastwards by war and diplomacy until, by 324, he had made himself sole Emperor. Two years later he established his capital in the Greek city of Byzantium, henceforth called Constantinople. This remained the centre of a united Roman Empire during the period covered by this section. After the death of Theodosius, the Empire was again divided. The western half, centred on Rome, quickly crumbled into ruin and was over-run by the barbarians. The eastern half, however, survived with gradually diminishing territories for more than a thousand years, and was at last destroyed by the Turks in 1453.

By the beginning of the fourth century Christianity had become so strong that the Empire was bound either to accept it or to suppress it. Diocletian tried the latter plan and failed. Constantine accepted the former alternative. Having conquered Rome in 313, Constantine met his one remaining rival, the eastern Emperor Licinius, at Milan, and they agreed to issue an Edict (the Edict of Milan) terminating the persecution and securing toleration for Christianity throughout the Empire.

The part played by Constantine in settling disputes within the Church at the Council of Nicaea has already been recorded (see page 122). How far Constantine was a genuine believer, and how far he was simply actuated by political motives cannot be known, and does not much matter. He postponed the ceremony of baptism till he was on his death-

bed, but it was quite common even for the devout in the early Church to postpone as long as possible what was originally intended as the ceremony of admission, for the rather quaint reason that since baptism gave forgiveness of sins, and since the rite could not be repeated, its efficacy was most certain if it was administered when there was no longer any chance of further sinning.

Constantine's nephew, the Emperor Julian (361-363), commonly known as Julian the Apostate, made one last attempt to restore paganism. Needless to say, his character has been painted in the blackest colours by Christian writers of his own day, but actually he was a much nobler man than the 'Christian' Constantine. While he rivals or surpasses Constantine as a soldier, he was also a man of saintly life, a fine scholar, and an accomplished and often humorous writer. It is sad and strange that the noblest of fourth century Emperors should have been the only one to set himself against the now irresistible tide of Christianity. No doubt he had seen the religion at its worst in the Imperial Court, where Christian professions had become the best trick of the courtiers' trade. He loved also the great Greek classics and felt that Christian intolerance was going to condemn them to oblivion; from this point of view he is a sort of far-off herald of the Renaissance. Further, he was something of a sentimentalist and antiquary, and loved ancient pagan rituals and superstitions simply because they were ancient. Christians jeered, not without excuse, at his revival of animal sacrifices. Indeed his paganism was a curious mixture of philosophy and superstition.

Such a man had a horror of the brutalities of persecution. In name he adhered to a policy of general toleration, but he set himself to hamper the Christians by closing their schools.

Julian was killed in battle at the age of thirty-two, after reigning only two years. Probably he had already realised that his religious policy was doomed to failure. Legend—it

is no more than legend—records that his last words were: "Vicisti, Galilæe!" ("Thou hast conquered, O Galilaean.")[1]

Julian's successors were all Christians. The final step was taken by Theodosius, who established the Nicene Creed as the exclusive religion of the Empire, forbade pagans and heretics to hold assemblies, and ordered the destruction of heathen temples. Thus paganism also had its martyrs, one of the most notable being Hypatia, mathematician and philosopher, one of the most admirable women of history, who was brutally murdered by the Christian mob of Alexandria in 415.[2]

Perhaps the most striking incident in the reign of Theodosius, an incident which shows that we are already in mediaeval rather than classical times, is the Emperor's encounter with Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Theodosius had put down a riot at Thessalonica with what Ambrose considered excessive violence. The bishop therefore rebuked him, and refused to admit him to communion until he had done public penance. This makes Theodosius seem nearer to Henry II. and Becket, eight hundred years after him, than to his pagan predecessors on the Imperial throne.

(iv) *Quality and Quantity.* During these first few centuries Christianity had grown from the religion of a handful of Jewish peasants to the religion of the Roman Empire. Yet the total result is in many ways disappointing. As much seems lost in quality as gained in quantity. The Nicene Creed is a poor affair compared with the Sermon on the

[1] The poet Swinburne has expanded this into the famous couplet:

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilaean
And the world is grown grey at thy breath."

This is mere musical nonsense. Christianity in the fourth century had many faults. It was full of strife and bitterness, envy, hatred, and malice, against heretics and also pagans, but it was not 'grey' or 'pale.' The Church was the one institution pulsating with the vigorous blood of youth in the midst of a 'grey,' 'pale,' worn out classic culture.

[2] Her story is told in Kingsley's novel, *Hypatia.*

Mount, and it is difficult to resist the impression that most Christians of the fourth century were more concerned about the Creed than about the Gospels.

What had happened? Christ had come preaching the Kingdom, and membership of the Kingdom was not a matter of creed but of human quality. The first Christians were Christians because they really tried to look at life through Christ's eyes: they had, so far as was possible to them, the *Faith of Christ.* Then Jesus passed from human sight. The Church arose and it became necessary to define its relationship to its Master, and its Master's relationship to God. This proved a very difficult matter: it absorbed an ever increasing amount of Christian energy. In fact, *belief about Christ* came to be considered the most important thing, the one and sufficient test of a Christian. But the merest glance at the Synoptic Gospels will show that the all-important thing is not belief *about* Christ but the Christ-like point of view, the faith *of* Christ.

Thus, what conquered Paganism was not Christianity in the proper sense of the word, but an institution called the Christian Church,—and rightly so-called because it did in fact contain elements which drew their inspiration from Christ, elements of which Christ could not be ashamed. But the Church contained much else besides which was not Christian, much that was pagan, even more that was pharisaical.

In the two remaining Parts of this book we shall be concerned with the history of the Church. The key to that history is only found when we remember that the so-called Christian Church was (and is) only partly Christian, and its history is the history of the struggle of the better elements in the Church to make the Church more truly Christian.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Part II

It is not necessary to indicate here any of the well-known detailed studies of the life and teaching of Christ.

1. *Donald Hankey, The Lord of All Good Life* (*Longmans*), a simple, devout, outspoken little book addressed to 'the man in the street,' consisting of "Part I.: Jesus of Nazareth, His Life and Work. Part II.: The Church: its Ideal, its Failure, and its Future."

2. *W. R. Inge, Outspoken Essays* (*Longmans*) contains an excellent essay on St. Paul.

3. *Kirsopp Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (*Rivingtons*) contains a good chapter on the development of the Church from the Resurrection to the time of St. Paul's missionary work.

4. *F. C. Burkitt, The Gospel History and its Transmission* (*T. & T. Clark*), an exceedingly interesting book, and indispensable for the study of the gospels; consists of ten lectures, the last two being devoted to Marcion and the Apocryphal Gospels.

5. *W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (*Longmans*). Though fifty years old this book is not and possibly never will be superseded. "Chapter II., The Pagan Empire," examines the religious condition of the Roman Empire apart from Christianity. "Chapter III., The Conversion of Rome," explains itself by its title. "Chapter IV., From Constantine to Charlemagne," is mainly occupied with the influence of the Church in the Dark Ages. (It should be said that these chapters are long essays of 150 or more pages apiece.)

6. *T. R. Glover, The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (*Methuen*). The title is to some extent a misnomer, as the book consists of a series of interesting biographical studies of leading Pagan and Christian thinkers from Christ down to Tertullian.

7. *H. M. Gwatkin, The Arian Controversy* (*Longmans*), a brief text-book in the "Epochs of Church History Series." This cannot be called an interesting book, but it contains useful information in a convenient form by an authority on the subject.

PART III

THE MEDIAEVAL CHURCH AND THE REFORMATION

CHAPTER X

GENERAL SURVEY

WE have to cover in this section a vast tract of history. In Part I., it is true, we covered thirteen centuries, but we were concerned throughout only with a single small nation. In Part II. we covered only four centuries, and were concerned with a quite limited though widely spread society, the early Church, living within the Roman Empire. In this Part III. we have to cover as many centuries as in Part I., and our subject embraces the whole community of European peoples professing the Christian faith. It will, therefore, be worth while to make a rough survey first of all of the ground we have to cover, dividing the whole up into periods of manageable length and indicating some of the main events of each.

Our whole period may be described as extending from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the end of the Reformation, or, using dates, 400-1700. These dates are mere round numbers and, indeed, it is impossible to fix on a single precise date for either event. The Roman Empire did not fall in a crash; it simply faded away,—faded so gradually that for centuries people refused to believe that it had gone. Charlemagne, the great King of the Franks (France and western

Germany), was hailed as a Roman Emperor by the Pope in 800 A.D., and the title was borne by rulers of Austria (Holy Roman Emperors) down to the time of Napoleon. Again, so-called Roman Emperors continued to rule in Constantinople till overthrown by the Turks in 1453. Still, we may say that after 410, when Alaric the Goth sacked Rome, the Empire was, so far as Western Europe was concerned, a ruin and a sham, and the real life of history flowed into other channels.

Again, there is no precise date for the end of the Reformation, but we may say that by 1700 Catholic and Protestant Churches had wearily abandoned their struggles for supremacy and settled down to live side by side, and the ideal of a single united Christian Church was given up as hopeless, only to revive in the twentieth century under very different conditions.

These thirteen centuries may be divided into four periods, to which again we may attach dates in round numbers.

(i) *The Dark Ages* (400-1050). The main external feature of this period is the endless strife of the barbarian tribes or peoples out of which the European nations were to grow. No settled life is possible. All the arts and sciences decay, and the Church itself is barbarised. The monastery is the only refuge of civilisation. People looked back to the orderly and prosperous life of the Roman Empire and longed for the return of that Golden Age. Others despaired of this and looked forward only to the end of the world. A great new world-religion arose in the east, Islam or Mohammedanism, a reversion to the strictest Jewish monotheism with the addition of a new revelation through Mohammed. This religion seemed likely to wipe Christianity out of existence. It conquered Jerusalem, northern Africa and Spain, and was only stayed in the centre of France in 732. Gathering its forces again it attacked by a different route, conquered Asia Minor in the eleventh century, crossed into the Balkan country about 1350, and from 1530 onwards held Hungary

right down to the seventeenth century. Even to-day the earliest homes of Christianity, Jerusalem and Antioch, are for the most part inhabited not by Christians but Mohammedans.

In English history this period begins with the Anglo-Saxon invasions and ends with the Norman Conquest.

(ii) *The Papal Period* (1050-1300). Out of this dismal confusion arose a new and beautiful civilisation, unlike anything that had been seen in the world before or that has been seen since. At the centre of this new order stood the Papacy, which in its great days was perhaps the most remarkable institution in history. The Julius Caesar of this new and strange 'Roman Empire'—for such it may well be called—was Hildebrand, also known under his papal name as Gregory VII. He was a contemporary of William the Conqueror and gave his blessing to the Norman Conquest. This great Christian civilisation covered Western Europe with splendid monuments of architecture, the Gothic Cathedrals: it organised those romantic adventures, the Crusades: it founded the Universities, and produced in them a great school of learning in which some part at least of the wisdom of the Greeks and Romans was re-discovered and applied to new uses: it produced great saints, such as Anselm and Francis of Assisi, and, in Dante, one of the great poets of the world.

The English history of this period begins with William the Conqueror and ends with our greatest mediaeval king, Edward I.

(iii) *The collapse of the Papal order* (1300-1521). The Papacy fell through its own fault, as will be told. The Popes began to use their religious authority for worldly ends. In the great period of the Papacy, when kings defied Popes, the people were generally and quite rightly on the side of the Popes. Now the peoples, and even the national leaders of the Church, tended to support the kings. Soon thoughtful Churchmen, such as the English Wycliffe, began to put

forward theories which suggested that the whole Papal organisation was contrary to true Christianity. The Papacy, meanwhile, allowed itself to be captured by the kings of France. For seventy years (1305-1378) the Popes deserted Rome and lived at Avignon in France. The Papacy became a French institution, little likely to be respected in England, for example, which was during most of that period at war with France. Then followed the Great Schism (1378-1415); rival Popes, one at Avignon and one at Rome, each denouncing the other as the agent of the devil. Then came an attempt to restore the central organisation by setting up a great international Parliament or Council side by side with the Papacy. This only led to quarrels between Pope and Council. Meantime, a great revival of interest in classical culture, the Renaissance, was leading many of the best minds of the day to despise Christian civilisation altogether. Men contrasted the Athens of Pericles and Plato with the 'Christian' world they lived in: was not every advantage on the side of the former? The Popes themselves were caught in the tide of the new movement. Leo X., the Pope who condemned Luther, had spoken jestingly of the life of Christ as a 'fable.' Rome itself was a sink of immorality. One of the Renaissance Popes, Alexander VI., has always been famous, deservedly or not, as an expert poisoner. He openly recognised, and promoted the interests of, his illegitimate children.

Thus, when Luther raised the standard of revolt in Germany, attacking Popery in the cause of Christ, half Europe sprang to his support.

In English history we have here covered the period from Edward II. to Henry VIII., including all the crimes and follies of the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of the Roses, the Tudor Restoration and the rule of Wolsey, the last great 'Archbishop Prime Minister' in English history.

(iv) *The Strife of Creeds.* Luther's Reformation failed to 'reform'; it became a rebellion, a revolution. The Church

was split into rival camps. This horrifying event compelled Rome to reform itself, and a great movement set in called the Counter-Reformation, in which the leading part was played by a new order, the Jesuits, founded by Ignatius Loyola, who was as truly a reformer as Luther himself. The old immorality was expelled, and with it all that was best in the intellectual and artistic movements of the Renaissance. Both sides grimly prepared for a war to the death. On the Protestant side a second and more vigorous and consistent form of Protestantism was founded by the great Frenchman Calvin, in the city of Geneva. John Knox and the Scottish Presbyterians and Covenanters, Cromwell, Bunyan, Milton and the English Puritans are disciples of Calvin. Rome fought the Calvinists with the Inquisition.

Then ensued the religious wars. Kings and princes chose their sides less from religious motives than from political convenience. All the horrors of religious fanaticism, political greed, and the hypocrisy which disguised the latter as the former, were seen combined. The strife only ended with the exhaustion of the combatants and the grudging recognition that complete victory was impossible for either party.

In English history we have covered the period from Henry VIII. to William III. This includes the Tudor Reformation, the persecutions of Queen Mary, the largely religious war with Spain, the Puritan rebellion against Charles I., the attempt of James II. to re-establish 'Popery,' and the first Toleration Act, carefully limited to the more moderate types of Dissenter, under William III.

Stated thus in outline it seems an appalling story, and so in many ways it is. None the less, when we look beneath the surface we shall find much splendid energy, much devoted idealism.

Most of what concerns the Reformation in England will be left over for Part IV. of this book, which gives a sketch of Christianity in England from the Reformation to the present day.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH AND CHRISTENDOM IN THE DARK AGES

THE good old word Christendom has for several centuries been little more than a meaningless slang-word; as when James I. was called by his brother monarch of France 'the wisest fool in Christendom.' In the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages, however, it had a quite definite meaning. It meant the society of peoples that accepted Christ, the Christian World. Thus it may be opposed on the one hand to Heathendom, the peoples to whom the gospel had not been preached, and on the other hand it may be opposed to the Church, the society of those within Christendom who definitely dedicated themselves to furthering the cause of Christ as a professional duty,—as we should say the clergy. We have here to examine what influence the Church succeeded, during these six 'Dark' centuries, 400-1000, in exercising over those who professed Christianity.

It is, to the Christian, somewhat disappointing that the first period during which Christianity was accepted as orthodoxy should be universally recognised as 'Dark.' Anti-Christian writers have often suggested that the Church was a prime cause of that darkness. 'Barbarians and Christians,' they say, combined to destroy the ancient civilisation. We cannot dismiss this view as absurd without disproving it. How much truth there is in it we shall see in the course of this chapter.

The distinguishing feature which marked Christianity off from all the pagan religions was its emphasis on morality. It made moral teaching the main duty of its clergy, moral discipline and inspiration the leading object of its services, and a moral life a necessary condition of communion. By its system of excommunication it excluded from the blessings of the Lord's Supper those who had broken, not the laws of the State, but the moral laws enacted by the Church for its members. English history teaches us to think of excommunication as a rather futile political weapon used by Popes against kings with whom they quarrelled on political grounds. But long before this it was used to enforce a standard of personal morality. Before the excommunicated person was readmitted to communion he was required publicly, before the assembled Christians, to appear clad in sackcloth, with ashes strewn upon his head, with his hair shaven off, and thus to throw himself at the feet of the minister, to confess aloud his sins, and to implore the favour of absolution. It was only at a much later date that the modern Catholic practice of secret confession by all members of the congregation was substituted for this awe-inspiring treatment of the backslider.

In what directions did this moral energy succeed in improving the standards of Christendom?

Its first and most striking triumph was the abolition of gladiatorial shows. These shows, at which specially trained slaves fought and shed one another's blood to gratify the brutal lusts of holiday crowds, were the worst blot on the civilisation of the Roman Empire. Their suppression was wholly the work of the Church. The Christians steadily refused to admit any gladiator to baptism unless he pledged himself to abandon his calling, and any Christian who attended the games was excluded from communion. The last gladiatorial show in the western half of the Empire took place in Rome in 404, when a monk named Telemachus rushed into the amphitheatre and attempted to part the

combatants. He perished beneath a shower of stones flung by the angry spectators: but his death led to the final abolition of the games.

In another very different direction the Church emphasised the sacredness of human life, teaching that our lives are not a form of property for us to use as we will but a trust to be used in God's service. The Church opposed with all its might the pagan teaching as to the dignity and even the glory of suicide.

As regards slavery the Church set a wholly new standard. In relation to God all Christians were equal. The slave and the slave-owner knelt together at communion. In the penal system of the Church, the system of excommunication and penance, the distinction between wrongs done to a freeman and wrongs done to a slave, which lay at the root of the ordinary civil law, was entirely abolished. Again, the Christian ideal of virtue, which exalted the previously despised qualities of gentleness, patience, and resignation, brought about a more sympathetic attitude to the slave. The ceremony of freeing slaves was placed by Constantine under the control of the clergy, who made it a special feature of Church festivals, and especially of Easter. Wealthy Christians began to free their slaves as a means of finding favour in God's sight. It was not, however, till about the thirteenth century that slavery disappeared from Europe. And when, later on, the colonising movement of the sixteenth century brought Christian nations into contact with helpless coloured peoples, it took the Church several centuries to realise that what was unchristian treatment of the white man was also unchristian treatment of the black.

Love is the highest Christian virtue, and in its narrower form of ' charity ' it made a special appeal to Christians living amidst the misery and confusion of the Dark Ages. The government of pagan Rome had for centuries distributed bread and free gladiatorial shows (*panem et circenses*), coldheartedly and as a device for keeping the poor quiet. It

was left for Christians to cover Christendom with a vast network of voluntary charitable associations whose avowed aim was to imitate their Master in relieving every form of human distress. A Christian lady named Fabiola founded the first charity hospital at Rome in the fourth century, and Christian hospitals quickly spread all over Christendom. Where charity took the form of giving money in relief of beggary, however, no doubt it often encouraged the evil it was meant to cure. Charity too often means pauperisation, and does more harm than good to those that receive it. Many gave more to save their own souls than to save the poor. Such is the difference between 'charity' and love. But, when all allowances are made, the spirit of charity must be written down as one of the great contributions of the Church of the Dark Ages.

But there were other enthusiasms of the Church of this period which were less beneficial to Christendom. The contrast between the Church and the World, so much dwelt upon in certain religious circles, is in some ways misleading. The Church must keep itself unspotted from the World; but at the same time its life is in the World, and its duty is to serve and rescue the World. None the less, as soon as men begin to concentrate on the salvation of their own souls and forget the gospel of love, there is apt to come over them a longing to make, as it were, a short cut to saintliness by abandoning ordinary human ties and seeking perfection 'in a vacuum.' The first form in which this disease, for it is nothing less, affected the Church was a glorification of the single life as more pure than marriage, fatherhood and motherhood. Then came an extraordinary enthusiasm for the hermit life. Men fled by hundreds and by thousands into the deserts and the mountains: they lived upon starvation diet: they deliberately cultivated dirt and disease. St. Eusebius lived for three years in a dried-up well: St. Sabinus would only eat corn that had become rotten by remaining for a month in water: St. Besarion

spent forty days and nights in the middle of thorn bushes.

But the extreme example of these excesses is St. Simeon Stylites (St. Simeon of the Pillar). Of him we read that " he bound a rope round him so that it became embedded in his flesh, which putrified around it. A horrible stench, intolerable to the bystanders, exhaled from his body, and worms dropped from him whenever he moved. He built a pillar sixty feet high and scarcely a yard in circumference on which, during thirty years, he remained exposed to every change of climate. For a year St. Simeon stood upon one leg, the other being covered with hideous ulcers while his biographer was commissioned to stand by his side, to pick up the worms that fell from his body, and to replace them in the sores, the saint saying to the worm, ' Eat what God has given you.' From every quarter pilgrims of every degree thronged to do him homage. When he died a crowd of prelates followed him to the grave, and the general voice of mankind pronounced him the highest model of a Christian saint." [1]

Such stories are exaggerated, you will say. That is very probable, but the exaggerations themselves show most clearly the ideals of the age which committed them.

We are far indeed here from the spirit of Christ. It becomes almost impossible to believe that such persons as St. Simeon had ever heard the gospel story. None the less it is possible to despise overmuch even the hermits or anchorites,[2] as they are called. Perverted and narrow-minded as their methods may have been, they had at least heard the call to self-sacrifice and they answered it, according to their lights, in no half-hearted manner. Whatever they were they were not idle triflers with life.

[1] Condensed from Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. p. 112.

[2] Hermit is derived from the Greek *eremites*, a dweller in the desert, anchorite from the Greek *anachoretes*, one who withdraws apart.

In the sixth century St. Benedict (480-544) turned this impulse of hatred of the world into more fruitful channels. For some time past some of the hermits had adopted the practice of living in small communities or 'monasteries.' Benedict may, however, be regarded as the founder of monasticism, in that he first laid down for the monks that gathered round him a regular disciplinary system.

The word 'monastery' means, by derivation, a place where you can be alone (Greek 'monos'). The original 'monk' was the hermit, and his monastery was his cave, or whatever other inconvenient place he chose to live in. Benedict's monasteries, however, were places where those who desired the life 'unspotted by the world' could live together in a kind of boarding school. Benedict, in fact, defines his monastery as 'a school of the service of the Lord.' The monks are ruled by an abbot, but both monks and abbot alike are subject to rules laid down by Benedict himself. In these rules the extremer forms of asceticism such as the hermits practised are forbidden. Sufficient food, sufficient clothing, and sufficient sleep are ordained. The monks are to find holiness not in injuring themselves but in benefiting others. 'Laborare est orare': work is prayer. Besides the work of daily religious services the monks are to do 'whatever work is useful,' whether manual or intellectual. Agricultural work predominated in early days, but soon schools grew up and the monasteries became the centres of education and of learning throughout the Middle Ages, until they were superseded in this respect by the universities.

The monastic movement once started drew to itself most of the religious energy of the Dark Ages. The monasteries appealed to rich and poor alike. The post of abbot in a conspicuous monastery was quite a suitable ambition for a member of a princely family: and the poorest of the poor could gain admittance as monks. The monasteries became oases of culture amid the deserts of ever-increasing barbarism,

harbours of refuge from the storms of unceasing war and pillage. In them the cult of Latin literature was preserved, and many Latin and Greek manuscripts were stored away and forgotten until unearthed by the curiosity of the Renaissance.

It is very difficult to estimate how much Christendom gained and how much it lost by the spread of monasticism. Some say, but for the monasteries civilisation and even Christianity itself must have utterly perished. Just as certain animals go to sleep in winter and bury themselves for protection from the cold, in order that they may come up alive again in the spring, so Christianity hibernated in the monasteries throughout the winter of the Dark Ages. On the other hand it may be said, suppose all this religious energy, instead of being absorbed in the monasteries, had gone out into the active life of the world,—how then? might not the Dark Ages have been less dark?

We can partly answer this charge against them by saying that, after all, the monks themselves by no means confined their energies within the four walls of their monasteries. Only fifty years after Benedict's death one of his monks becomes the virtual founder of the Papacy, a great Christian statesman, with energies reaching from Canterbury to Constantinople. All through the Dark and Middle Ages we shall find monks playing great parts.

None the less, it remains true that the Christianity of the Dark Ages did too often despise the concerns of this world. The failure of government in the Dark Ages is very largely a failure of patriotism: the best men simply would not trouble to discharge those political and social duties which are necessary to the maintenance of social order. And the blame for this must partly be laid at the door of the Church, which too easily despised patriotism as 'worldly.'

CHAPTER XII

GREAT CHRISTIANS OF THE DARK AGES

(i) *Augustine* (354-430).

ST. AUGUSTINE,[1] the greatest of the 'Latin Fathers' of the Church, was the most important Christian thinker and writer of this period, and he has probably exercised a wider influence on Christian thought than any writer except those of the New Testament. His life covers the period of the downfall of the Roman Empire in the west. The sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth was the most striking event of his lifetime, and when he died the Vandals were overrunning the Roman province of Africa, in which he was born and spent most of his life, and he was himself besieged by them in the town of Hippo, of which he was bishop.

He has left us, in his *Confessions*, an autobiography which enables us to trace the growth of his mind in detail.

His mother, Monica, was a Christian of saintly character, but, after the custom of those times, Augustine was not baptised in infancy, and when he grew to manhood Christianity entirely lost its hold over him. But though he ceased to be Christian he did not cease to be religious, and sought eagerly for a faith that would satisfy his longings. For a time he was attracted by the Manichaeans, a religious sect of Persian origin who held that God and the Devil were equal

[1] Not to be confused with the later Augustine who brought Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons in 597.

powers, and that human life was originally created by the Devil and is therefore naturally evil. From these he turned to the Neo-Platonists, who, like the Stoics, attempted to base a religion on Greek philosophy. Then he went to Milan and sought to learn Christianity from its great bishop, St. Ambrose. It was during this period that he experienced a 'conversion' as sudden and dramatic as that of St. Paul. His mind was much overwrought by his struggle between the claims of religion and human love for a woman to whom he was betrothed; for Christian thought of the day regarded lawful marriage itself as inferior in holiness to celibacy. In an agony of doubt he threw himself under a fig tree in the garden and poured forth tears and prayers. Suddenly he heard a voice crying, "Tolle, lege":—take up and read. So he took up the New Testament, and opening it at random lighted upon the text in the Epistle to the Romans: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Henceforth his course was clear, and we need not follow his later life. Augustine was thirty-two at the time of his conversion. Some two years later he became bishop of Hippo. Of all the many controversies with which his writings are concerned, two only can be mentioned here. A new and dangerous heresy had arisen called Pelagianism, its founder Pelagius being a Christian from Roman Britain. Pelagius denied the doctrine of Original Sin; that is to say, he asserted that it was possible for man to lead a completely good life without the assistance of God. Against this Augustine asserted that it is impossible to struggle successfully against sin without the aid of God supplied through Christ, and Augustine's view is upheld by the Church to this day. In stating his case, however, Augustine was driven by his natural vehemence to assert that salvation was impossible without baptism, and that infants dying unbaptised were irretrievably damned. So hard has it always been to keep

theology true to the spirit of Christ. This was particularly difficult for the 'Latin Fathers.' The dominant intellectual influence in Rome was not, as in Greece, philosophic speculation, but Roman law, and those who came under this influence tended to view religion as a hard and fast contractual relationship between God and man. Augustine's teaching on this subject had, however, a powerful influence towards introducing the practice of infant baptism.

A second controversy produced Augustine's greatest work, the *De Civitate Dei* (Concerning the City of God). After the sack of Rome by Alaric, many enemies of the new religion had asserted that it was Christianity that had undermined the Roman Empire and delivered it over a prey to the barbarians. The *De Civitate Dei* is Augustine's reply. He surveys in bold outline the past, present, and future. He shows convincingly that it was by their virtues, their valour, their frugality, their purity, their contempt for self-indulgence that the old Romans had built up their Empire. Similarly it was through their vices, their immorality, luxury, and effeminacy that the Empire had fallen in ruins. With this picture of the rise and fall of the old City, he contrasted the rise of the new City, the City of God, Christendom. The old Rome was fated to fall that in its place might rise a new and more glorious Rome, the Christian World. The forecast had a strange fulfilment in the rise of the Papacy and the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire. Augustine's great book is the link between the Gospels and the Middle Ages. Like many great forecasts, it helped to fulfil that which it prophesied.

(ii) *Jerome* (340-420). Augustine's contemporary Jerome, though a much less remarkable man, exercised an important influence on the Church in two ways. He made a translation of the Bible in Latin which became the Textum Vulgatum (Common Text) or Vulgate, the authorised version of the Scriptures used in the Roman Church down to this day. Also, as he lived a great part of his life at Bethlehem in a

monastery of his own foundation, he may be reckoned the first great 'pilgrim'; in fact, from Jerome dates that romantic interest in the 'Holy Land' which ultimately produced the Crusades.

Jerome was before all things a scholar. In his youth, he tells us, he could not help feeling the prophets and the epistles crude and ugly compared with the polished styles of Plato and Cicero. He dreamt that Christ appeared to him and reproached him with being more of a Ciceronian than a Christian, and henceforth he vowed to devote his scholarship to Holy Scripture. It is a mark of his scientific spirit that he was not content with the Greek translation of the Old Testament which was used all over the eastern part of the Empire, but set to work to learn Hebrew so that he might base his Latin translation on the original. He secured the assistance of Jewish rabbis, and when the Vulgate was finished he said, "Let him who would challenge anything in this translation, ask the Jews."

To Jerome we owe the distinction between the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha consists of the books found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation begun at Alexandria in the third century B.C. for the use of the Jews of that city), but excluded from the Hebrew scriptures. Jerome includes the Apocryphal books in his text, but adds that the Church reads them "for the edification of the people, not for confirming the authority of ecclesiastical doctrine."

Jerome's Vulgate served to introduce the ordinary man of Italy and the West, the man who could read but was no scholar, to the actual text of Scripture. Hitherto, though certain Latin translations had been made, the Bible was usually only available in Greek, and Greek, though the common tongue of the Eastern Empire, was only known to scholars in the west. Even in the west, of course, few could read any language at all, and the number of such, outside the monasteries, diminished steadily during the centuries of the Dark Ages that ensued. Yet, just as the English Bible

has proved the foundation-stone of the English Church, so the Vulgate helped to create the sense of religious unity among Latin as distinct from Greek speaking peoples, and it was thus one of the forces that paved the way for the creation of the Papacy.

(iii) *Gregory the Great* (540-604) *and the beginnings of the Papacy.* Gregory the Great—known in English history as the author of the pun ' Non Angli sed Angeli,' the Pope who sent Augustine to preach Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons—is the last of the Fathers and the first of the great Popes. This, then, is the convenient place to give some account of the origins of the Papacy.

Christianity appears to have reached Rome ten or fifteen years before St. Paul was brought there as a prisoner, and the Church of the capital of the world at once assumed importance, as is shown by the fact that St. Paul addressed to it his longest and most elaborate Epistle, the only Epistle addressed to a community which he had not, at the time of writing, personally visited. A few years later the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul at Rome gave the Roman Church further prestige. So long as Christianity was a ' rebel religion ' the bishop of Rome seems to have been recognised as the highest authority within the Church, though there was but little attempt at centralised control.

When, however, the Emperor adopted Christianity and left Rome for Constantinople all this was changed. According to the Imperial theory the Emperor was head of the Church, and under him were five ' patriarchs ' of equal standing, the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Of these Rome might well seem the least, when the West was being more and more given over to barbarians who were either heathens or, what was considered just as bad, Arians. The difficulties of the bishops of Rome proved, however, their opportunities. Deserted by its emperors, Rome and Italy too came to look to the Pope

or bishop of Rome as its bulwark of defence against barbarism. When the Arian Alaric the Goth sacked Rome (410) he spared the Christian Churches out of respect for Pope Innocent I. When the far more terrible heathen Attila the Hun threatened to invade Italy (452), Pope Leo I. went to meet him in the neighbourhood of Venice, and by his eloquence persuaded him to turn back. Forty years later the fierce conqueror Clovis the Frank was baptised (496) by the bishop of Reims and founded the first Catholic (*i.e.* not Arian) barbarian kingdom in Gaul. This alliance of the Papacy and the Franks was to be of enormous importance three centuries later.

When Gregory became Pope in 590, Italy had for twenty-two years been suffering from the last and in some ways the worst of her barbarian invaders, the Arian Lombards.

Gregory was born of wealthy parents, received a good education, and adopted a political career. In 573 he was Prefect of the city of Rome. The next year, however, he felt himself irresistibly drawn to the 'religious' life; he devoted his fortune to founding seven monasteries, and himself became a monk. He was the first monk to be bishop of Rome, and this combination of political experience and monastic ideals affords the key to his career. In 590 he was literally forced to take up the burden of the Papacy: "While he was preparing for flight," his biographer tells us, "he was seized and carried off and dragged to the Church of St. Peter" and there consecrated bishop.

The Pope was at this date already the greatest landlord in Italy. The Lombards had encroached on his estates and could only be dislodged by force. In fighting for his own estates Gregory was fighting the battle of Italy and of civilisation, and he was quickly recognised as the national leader. He appointed governors of cities, issued orders to generals, organised the provision of munitions, and finally, through the Catholic queen of the Lombards, Theodelinda, brought about a favourable peace. The Lombards aban-

doned Arianism, and, though they were a troublesome and unteachable folk, began to improve in other respects also.

As regards Christian Churches outside Italy, Gregory maintained the principle that all were subject to the Apostolic See (*i.e.* the bishopric of Rome as founded by St. Peter, according to legend). But he was wise enough to refrain from pressing the claim too far, and he recognised the superior authority of the Emperor at Constantinople.

His missionary enterprise in England had an importance that extends far beyond our own country. It was the first great province that the Dark Ages recovered from heathendom, and the first great achievement of Papal 'foreign policy.' Moreover, the English Church became in the next two centuries the centre of the most vital and vigorous Christianity that the world could then show. England produced Bede, the best historian of the Dark Ages, Boniface, who brought Christianity to the Frisians of Holland and north-west Germany, and Alcuin the chief adviser of Charlemagne. It is a curious thing, this temporary splendour of Anglo-Saxon, or rather Northumbrian, Christianity. When the invasions of the Northmen began, the English Church declined in spite of all the efforts of Alfred and Dunstan, and by the time of the Norman Conquest England had become one of the most backward provinces of Christendom.

Gregory must have been one of the hardest workers that ever lived. "He never rested," says his biographer; "he was always engaged in providing for the interests of his people, in writing some composition worthy of the Church, or in searching out the secrets of heaven." He wrote a commentary on the Book of *Job*, and delivered lectures on other books of the Bible. Tradition says that he was the author of the famous Gregorian system of Church music. This appears to be untrue, but there is no doubt that he greatly interested himself in the ritual of Church services, and sightseers are, I believe, still shown the rod with which

Gregory is supposed not only to have conducted his music but also maintained order among his choir boys.

(iv) *Between Gregory and Charlemagne* (604-768). *The rise of Mohammedanism.* Two hundred years after Gregory, on Christmas Day 800, Pope Leo III. crowned the Frankish King Charles, while he was kneeling at mass in St. Peter's, and saluted him as *Carolus Augustus a Deo coronatus* (Charles Augustus crowned by God) and thus founded that extraordinary institution, afterwards the bitter enemy of the Papacy, the Holy Roman Empire. Before describing the life and character of the great Christian Emperor we must survey the events that led up to this new departure.

In 622 Mohammedanism as a distinct and militant religion was founded by the expulsion of the prophet and his followers from Mecca. The new religion at once proclaimed a Holy War against all unbelievers, and began to spread with the irresistible rapidity of an epidemic. Indeed the nearest parallel is to be found in the conquests of Alexander which, moving even more rapidly in the opposite direction, carried Hellenism from Greece eastwards to the Indus. By 640 Antioch and Jerusalem, the two first centres of Christianity had fallen. Before 700 Constantinople had experienced (but survived) its first Mohammedan investment, and Christian Africa, the home of Augustine, had been lost. In 711 the Saracens, as they were called, entered Spain and overthrew the kingdom of the Christian Visigoths. In 732 they were in the centre of France, and only here reached their limit. The tide was stayed and turned back to the Pyrenees by the victory of Charles Martel at Tours[1] in 732.

What was the cause of this astounding triumph? It lies in the character of the new religion. 'Islam' means 'submission.' It is the religion, it has been said, of submission to God, while Christianity is the religion of co-operation with God. Certain it is that, in Mohammedanism, everything

[1] The battle is sometimes called Tours, sometimes Poitiers.

made for the complete fusion of the religious and the political and military organisation. Christ taught his disciples to rely on spiritual forces alone. Mohammed made war a religious duty and taught that those slain in battle against the infidel were the surest of eternal blessedness. His heaven was a pagan Valhalla of heroic warriors. Apart from this, the Mohammedan movement enlisted that enthusiasm which it seems novelty alone can secure: Christendom was six centuries old and distracted by political and sectarian jealousies, as it is to-day. Further, the Mohammedans were everywhere helped by the Jews, whom they treated much more generously than the Christians had done. Indeed Mohammedanism preferred to live upon its conquered enemies rather than to exterminate them: if unbelievers would submit to Mohammedan government and taxation they were otherwise unmolested.

Such a movement naturally led Christians to reflect on their own shortcomings. They would try and find what sources of efficiency there were in this new religion which Christendom could imitate without being untrue to Christ. This movement of ideas produced two results, one in the east and one in the west of Christendom.

In the east, a great Roman Emperor, Leo the Isaurian (717-740), became convinced that Mohammedanism was sent by God to punish Christendom for its idolatrous worship of images and saintly relics. In fact, he viewed Islam very much as the Hebrew prophets viewed Assyria and Babylon. So he issued an edict for the destruction of all images in the churches. The reader will at once be reminded of our own Puritan movement, which has left its destructive marks on almost every ancient church in the country. The parallel is a fair one up to a certain point, but this Puritanism of the Dark Ages, the Iconoclastic Movement as it is called (Greek *icon* = an image, *clazo* = I break), did not win popular support as the Puritan movement did. The reason may be that it was purely negative. The Puritan movement said in effect,

" Break your images and turn to your Bibles " ; the Iconoclastic movement merely said, " Break your images." In any case, popular opposition sprang up and the Papacy skilfully placed itself at its head. In 731 Gregory III. held a Council at Rome, issued edicts against image-breakers, and anathematised, *i.e.* laid a curse upon, the Emperor whose subject he was still supposed to be.

The Greek and the Roman Churches had indeed been drifting apart ever since the time of Constantine. It would seem as if the final rupture had now taken place. As a matter of fact Iconoclasm was abandoned and the quarrel patched up. None the less the union of Christendom was henceforth only nominal. The final separation on a point of doctrine came in 1054.[1] From that date there are two entirely distinct organisations, the Catholic Church centring on Rome and the Orthodox Church, centring first on Constantinople and, after the Turkish occupation, on Moscow.

At the same time as the Papacy turned its back on Constantinople it turned its face towards the rulers of the Franks. Who so proper a champion of Rome as Charles Martel, the ' Hammer ' of the Saracens ? The Pope was again at war with the Lombards. Charles was too busy in France to assist him, but after his death his son Pipin was inclined to strike a bargain with the Papacy. The great missionary Boniface acted as mediator between them. Pipin, like his father Charles, was virtually king of the Franks, but by title he was only ' Mayor of the Palace,' a kind of Prime Minister. If the Pope would make him king and dethrone the powerless Childeric, descendant of Clovis, Pipin would invade Italy and destroy the Lombard power.

So it was arranged. In 750 Pipin was made king of the Franks by the ' command ' of the Pope, who absolved him from his oath of allegiance to King Childeric. He was anointed by Boniface. Four years later Pipin crossed the Alps, defeated the Lombards, and presented to the Pope the

[1] See note on p. 161.

great province of Ravenna on the Northern Adriatic shores of Italy. This province had for three hundred years and more been under an Exarch, or Viceroy of the Emperor at Constantinople. In 751 the Lombards had expelled the Exarch, and now in 754 it was taken from the Lombards by the Franks and presented to the Papacy.

Here we have two significant beginnings. First, a Pope claims to create kings, reviving the ceremony of anointing with oil. Thus Samuel the prophet of God had anointed Saul and David. Secondly, the Popes figure definitely as temporal princes ruling ' States of the Church.' The province of Ravenna was to remain Papal territory until Cavour and Garibaldi created the modern kingdom of Italy eleven hundred years later.

Just about this time an extraordinary historical forgery was composed and circulated in support of the Pope's temporal pretensions. It purported to be an edict of the Emperor Constantine handing over to the bishop of Rome the government of the whole of the western provinces of the Empire. Though no such edict had in fact ever been issued, nor was likely to have been issued, it seemed, amid the ignorance of the Dark Ages, to fit in well enough with the two main facts about Constantine, his removal of the seat of government to Constantinople and his acceptance of Christianity. Thus this forged ' Donation of Constantine,' as it was called, deceived the whole world until the forgery was denounced by Valla, one of the scholars of the Renaissance, in 1450. Martin Luther was brought up to believe in the ' Donation,' and he tells us that the reading of Valla's pamphlet was one of the first things that shook his faith in the divine claims of the Papacy.

(v) *Charlemagne*[1] (742-814). Charlemagne succeeded his father Pipin as king of the Franks in 768. The events

[1] Charlemagne = Carolus Magnus, Charles the Great. A determined effort was made by some Victorian historians under German influence

recorded in the last section have already shown how natural it was that he should become a 'Holy Roman Emperor.' The Eastern emperors had alienated Western Christendom by their iconoclastic policy. They had also lost their last province in Italy. At the same time the Frankish kings had entered Italy and were in close alliance with the Papacy. Finally, there was the example of Islam pointing to the value of a close union between Church and State under a single powerful ruler.

Charlemagne had made himself in fact Emperor or supreme ruler of all the western Christians before the Pope conferred the title on him by solemn religious ceremonial. He conquered the Lombard kingdom and assumed their 'iron crown,' worn by all his successors and finally by Napoleon. His wars against the Saxons of Germany carried Christianity and Frankish rule beyond the Elbe. He helped the Spanish Christians to drive back the Saracens as far as the Ebro. He intervened in the affairs of the petty kingdoms of England. He corresponded with the Mohammedan Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun-al-Raschid of *The Arabian Nights*, and secured a kind of vague protectorate over Christians in Asia with the right of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The actual imperial coronation during mass on Christmas Day 800 seems to have been sprung on Charles as a surprise by the Pope. Charles was already preparing to revive in his own person the glorious unity of the old Roman Empire, but by other means. Emperors still ruled at Constantinople, and to defy their authority would be to sow fresh seeds of discord. At the moment an Empress, Irene, was on the throne, and there is little doubt that Charles aimed at a marriage which would reunite eastern and western Christendom and reverse the policy of Constantine by bringing the capital back to Rome. The Pope cut short and frustrated

to depose the name 'Charlemagne' in favour of Karl on the ground that the Franks were by origin Teutonic. This is scarcely more sensible than calling Napoleon 'Buonaparte' (four syllables) on the ground that he was born a Corsican.

these plans, which were perhaps in any case doomed to failure, and by crowning the Emperor himself laid the basis of the theory that Popes ranked above Roman Emperors and could make and unmake them at will. This view Charles and his successors always disputed.

So long, however, as Charles reigned, the Pope was likely to be little more than his first subject. Charles ruled the Church as he ruled the state: he lectured Popes, appointed bishops, watched over the morals of the clergy, presided over Church councils, and, extraordinary as it may seem, secured a slight alteration in the wording of the Creed, contrary to the wishes of the Pope.[1] Charles grew to manhood without ever having learnt to write, and his attempts to acquire this art in old age proved unsuccessful, but he had a real love of learning, and could read though he could not write. His favourite book was Augustine's *City of God*. He was energetic in founding schools for the clergy, and, by encouraging and assisting men more learned than himself, undoubtedly brought about a faint flickering revival of learning that helped to keep the two or three remaining centuries of the Dark Ages from becoming altogether pitch dark.

For darkness returned on Church and State after Charlemagne. The Empire fell to pieces, and the Papacy fell into a seemingly bottomless pit of incompetence and corruption. We may draw a veil over two centuries, and recommence the story with the events, roughly contemporary with the Norman Conquest, which ushered in the great civilisation of the Middle Ages.

[1] Addition of the word 'filioque,' describing the Holy Ghost as "proceeding from the Father *and the Son*." The objection of the Eastern Church to this insertion caused the final rupture between the two Churches in 1054.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT AGE OF THE PAPACY (1073-1303)

IT is always difficult for one age to understand another, and it is perhaps peculiarly difficult for us of the twentieth century to understand the Middle Ages. It is so much easier either to idealise or to condemn. On the whole the popular view in England has been condemnation. The Crusades, we have been told, were the product of mere superstition, playing upon a lust for useless adventures. The monasteries were homes of idleness or, at best, of a very stupid kind of learning. The 'saints' were narrow-minded folk, and the scholars only wrote bad Latin. And no institution has fared worse in popular judgment than the Papacy. All our Protestant and all our patriotic instincts turn us against it. The Pope is a foreigner interfering with our English liberties, and, however much he may disguise it, it always turns out to be our *money* that he's after. He interferes with the king's law-courts, and attempts to get the clergy tried in courts of his own,—for the money it brings. He appoints foreigners to English bishoprics—for money. He puts up Heaven itself for sale and offers tickets of admittance, called 'Pardons'—for money.

Yet another view is possible. A distinguished modern English historian,[1] not a Roman Catholic, describes the Papacy as 'the greatest institution in human history,' and 'taking it all in all the greatest power for good that existed at the time (the Middle Ages) or perhaps has ever existed.'

[1] A. L. Smith, *Church and State in the Middle Ages.*

The Papacy, in fact, stood for 'the united action of the civilised world in pursuit of the highest aims which it could conceive.' What were these aims?—the realisation of the dream of St. Augustine, the establishment of the 'City of God,' the establishment, if you prefer the modern phrase, of a 'League of Nations' working together harmoniously for the maintenance of Christ's law and the enlargement of God's kingdom.

The men of the Middle Ages were reckless idealists, and their actions were often absurdly unworthy of their principles. They failed, and for centuries we, with our acceptance of religious disunion and national rivalries, treated their ideals as moonshine. But in so far as we are to-day attempting (i) to found a League of Nations which will put an end to war; (ii) to establish friendliness and co-operation between our various Christian Churches; (iii) to carry civilisation and with it Christianity to the ends of the earth:—in so far as we are trying to do these things we are returning to the ideals of the Middle Ages.

Perhaps the best way to begin to understand the Middle Ages is to visit the great cathedrals they have left us. We have built nothing since in England that is even distantly comparable with them. The present writer was once being shown round Ely Cathedral, and someone remarked to our guide: "Ely must have been a big place in those days to need such a big church." He was answered: "The people that built this cathedral did not build for the people of Ely: they built for the glory of God."

Of course it is easy to go from one extreme to the other and to 'white-wash' the Middle Ages, pretending they were better than they were. This book will not attempt to 'white-wash' them. Still, on the whole, if we wish to understand either an age or an individual, it is better to err on the side of sympathy than on the side of fault-finding, to dwell on the good points more than on the bad ones.

(i) *Gregory VII.* (*Hildebrand*) (1073-1085). As the founder of the greatness of the mediaeval Papacy Hildebrand, or, to call him by the name he assumed when Pope, Gregory VII., must always rank as one of the great figures of history.

We left both Papacy and Empire crumbling into decay after the death of Charlemagne. In 962 the Holy Roman Empire was revived by the German King Otto the Great. This is the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages. These emperors could not claim, like Charlemagne, a universal empire over all western Christians. They limited themselves to Germany and Italy, some preferring Italy, some Germany as their centre of government. The Papacy, on the other hand, went from bad to worse for some time longer. It reached its low-water mark in the first half of the eleventh century, when it became practically the family property of the nobles of Tusculum. One of the Popes of this period, Benedict IX., became Pope at the age of twelve, and developed all the qualities which will get a boy expelled from school or a man turned out of the better sort of society.

In 1046 a strong Emperor, Henry III., intervened, deposed three rival Popes and nominated a stern and godly German, his cousin Leo IX., in their place. Leo IX. brought with him the young Italian scholar called Hildebrand, who for nearly forty years, first as a kind of prime-minister to a succession of Popes, and finally as Pope himself, was the life and soul of the great reform for which all devout Christians were longing.

Hildebrand's work was to express in a visible, that is to say a 'political,' organisation the deep religious conviction of the best minds of his day, that the Pope as head of the Church was God's Viceroy on earth and ought to be supreme over all the 'Kingdoms of this world.' The Emperor had freed the Papacy from the control of the Tusculan nobles: the next step must be to free it from the control of the Emperor. It was convenient for this purpose that Henry III. died in 1056, leaving a mere boy, Henry IV., as his successor. A new

system was established, and Popes henceforth were elected by the cardinals in secret session or 'conclave.' The cardinals were ecclesiastical officials appointed by the Popes; thus the election was kept free from external or lay interference and a general continuity of policy assured. This system, though often assailed by the emperors in the next two centuries, has lasted in all essentials to the present day.

Far more difficult was it to secure for the Papacy the control of the national Churches. Gregory demanded that bishops should in future be appointed not by the kings but by the Pope. Such a demand illustrates well the reckless idealism of the Middle Ages, for its fulfilment was quite impossible. The bishops of the Middle Ages were much more than merely ecclesiastical officials: they were great landlords, and hence feudal barons: also, since the clergy were the only educated class, they performed much of the work of civil government. Right down to the time of Wolsey in England the king's chief ministers were clerics and were given bishoprics as payment for their political work. Hildebrand's demand then would mean that the kings should give up the control of their own great landlords and the most convenient method of paying their higher officials.

In this particular cause the Papacy was bound to fail, but no lesser claim would perhaps have been as effective. Here was a new 'Great Power,' challenging the mightiest monarchies as David challenged Goliath, 'in the name of the Lord of Hosts.' One incident in the long quarrel between Pope and Emperor has become celebrated as the proudest day in the history of the Papacy, as Trafalgar is the proudest day in the history of the British Navy. The Emperor sought to depose the Pope: the Pope excommunicated the Emperor: his subjects, glad of the religious pretext, rose against his misgovernment. Henry fled to Italy and sought the Pope: his only escape from political ruin was through penance. For three January days and nights, so runs the story, did the Emperor humbly wait in the courtyard of the castle of

Canossa, where the Pope was staying, before the Pope would consent to admit him. Not a shot was fired : not a drop of blood was shed : none the less Canossa (1077) deserves to rank as one of the great battles of history. (Modern research has shown that the incident at Canossa was less important *at the time* than later tradition made it out to be : it has also thrown doubts on the Emperor's three nights in the courtyard. None the less these exaggerations themselves show the impression the event made on the mediaeval mind, and the impression it made is the measure of its real and permanent importance. It is the mark of a really great event that the prose of fact gets buried under the poetry of legend. Two other good examples are Magna Carta and the Fall of the Bastille.)

(ii) *Successors of Gregory VII.* (1086-1303). It will be simplest to complete here our outline of the Great Age of the Papacy, so far as the Popes themselves are concerned. The next chapter will deal with the Crusades, that is to say, papal foreign policy, and the chapter following will illustrate a few of the many religious movements of the age as personified in their leaders.

At first sight the history of the Papacy in this period appears to be nothing but an endless struggle with the Empire, both Pope and Emperor alike claiming to be God's viceroy on earth. True it is, and the struggle first degraded and then destroyed them both. Before we touch this struggle, therefore, let us set down some of the worthier but less sensational undertakings in which the Popes led the Church and the Church led the world.

(i) The Church, led by the Popes, particularly Innocent III. (1198-1216), compiled and enforced a reasonable and uniform marriage law in place of the barbarous confusion of customs that had prevailed throughout the Dark Ages.

(ii) The Church law-courts, though often vexatious to kings, as Becket's courts were to Henry II., none the less

provided a model of legal procedure (canon law) based on Roman law, far in advance of the law of the secular kingdoms.

(iii) The Church, led by the Popes, exerted itself to limit, even though it could not abolish, the savage superstitions which beset the people, and were indeed the survivals of heathenism: "to bring this world of terrors within rule and measure; to make the achievement of victory over it a plain matter of business, a thing to be done by hard prayer, penance and good works." [1]

(iv) The Papacy secured the establishment of celibacy (non-marriage) of priests. No doubt this was in some respects a bad principle, and based on false ideas about marriage already mentioned. Many priests, too, when forbidden wives, kept mistresses. Still it marks a great effort of self-denial. Also it effectively prevented the clergy from becoming, as in most eastern religions, a hereditary caste. In fact the Church, in which peasants often became Popes, was much the most democratic institution of the middle ages.

(v) The Papacy struggled, and not without success, to abolish simony, *i.e.* sale of bishoprics and livings for money.

(vi) Lastly, the immense controversies that its struggles with the Empire and national authorities provoked stimulated intellectual activity in all directions, particularly theology and law, and thus promoted the welfare of the infant universities.

Four names alone among these Popes need be mentioned: Urban II. (1088-1099), the organiser of the First Crusade: Innocent III. (1198-1216), the most powerful of the Popes: Innocent IV. (1243-1254), the Pope who first consciously and deliberately used the papal power for base ends: Boniface VIII. (1294-1303) with whom it fell. (We shall return to Urban II. in the next chapter.)

Innocent III. was the most powerful of all the Popes. His reign happened to coincide with a period of disunion in the Empire, and Philip Augustus, one of the greatest kings of

[1] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 18.

France, was his firm supporter. On the whole Hildebrand's policy of freeing the bishops from the control of the kings had failed. Innocent tried to secure the same end by a different means: he sought to make the kings mere 'feudal barons' of the Pope. He had a long quarrel with King John of England, in which he was completely victorious. John submitted when in 1213 Innocent threatened him with a French invasion. The movement for Magna Carta was led by Stephen Langton, whom Innocent had nominated archbishop against the king's wishes. After John's death William Marshall Earl of Pembroke became regent, and on his own death two years later (1218) left the young king in the charge of the papal legate Pandulph, who practically ruled England for the next few years. Indeed England was practically under papal control until 1254. English histories are fond of pointing out the iniquities of papal influence during this period, but the fact remains that Bishop Grosseteste, the greatest Englishman of the time both as churchman and statesman, held that the papal influence did far more good than harm.

The previous Popes from Hildebrand onwards, though their moral influence had swayed the Christian world, possessed hardly any material resources except such as they could get from alliances with secular princes. Often they were exiled from their own capital, being driven out sometimes by the Emperor, sometimes by the turbulent Roman citizens, who from time to time set up a kind of rebel republic in imitation of the republic of classical times. Innocent III., however, as the result of a series of fortunate accidents, was practically King of Italy. It was natural that the Popes should value temporal dominions, since a vast administrative system like the Papacy could not be run without solid financial resources, and revenues due from kingdoms beyond the Alps were often hard to raise. None the less, this political power of Innocent III. proved the ruin of the Papacy. In their eagerness to maintain it the Popes adopted

measures which discredited their religious authority. In grasping the shadow of worldly power they lost the substance of spiritual leadership.

Innocent IV. (1243-1254) marks the turning point. A mighty Emperor had arisen again, Frederick II. of Hohenstauffen, one of the ablest rulers in history. For various reasons he made Sicily, not Germany, the centre of his empire. Innocent IV. devoted his whole energies to the destruction of Frederick. He preached a 'crusade' against him: he turned the whole power of the Church into a machine for extorting money by fair means or foul (mostly foul) from every corner of Christendom. He won his battle because Frederick died and left no one who could carry on his task as he had done. But it was one of those victories in which victor and vanquished are alike ruined. For it was plain to all the world that this Pope was no true viceroy of Christ. He was, as a modern historian says, simply 'a consummate man of business,' a bold, daring, and unscrupulous statesman of the type that made modern Prussia. His very success dealt the Papacy a moral blow from which it never recovered.

What this meant was shown when Boniface VIII. (1294-1303), another Innocent IV. in character, tried to play once again the part of Innocent III. He issued a bull (or edict) 'Clericis laicos' forbidding the taxation of the clergy for purposes of war by national kings. In Edward I. of England and Philip le Bel of France he had to meet two very able and powerful adversaries. Edward I., with his parliament behind him, defied the bull with complete success. Philip le Bel took more violent measures. He threw a papal legate into prison. He had the bull publicly burnt in front of Notre Dame in Paris, thus anticipating the more famous action of Luther (see page 214). Finally, he authorised his Italian allies to kidnap the Pope himself. As Boniface sat unsuspecting in the retirement of his native city Anagni, he was suddenly surprised and maltreated, without a blow being struck on his behalf. Three days later he was rescued, but

his authority and his mental balance were gone. Frenzied or broken hearted, he died a month afterwards.

The great age which began at Canossa ended at Anagni. It was a brutal act, but why was it a successful one? Had such a blasphemous outrage been perpetrated against Hildebrand all Europe would have rung with indignation, and assuredly the Papacy would not have been the loser, whatever fate might have befallen the individual Pope. But now no one seemed to mind. The moral authority was gone. Philip le Bel could act as he did because the French Church was on his side.

Two years later (1305) a new Pope, elected under French influence, took up his residence at Avignon, in the south of France. The 'captivity' of the Papacy had begun. The Middle Ages were crumbling down towards the Reformation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CRUSADES

(i) *The Causes of the Crusades.*

NO great movement in history sprang from more various motives than the Crusades. Some of these motives were not religious at all. We are here concerned with the crusades only in so far as they belong to the history of Christianity, but it is necessary to notice some of the non-religious causes, since without these the Crusades could never have taken place. It was the skill of the Papacy that turned into religious channels and used for the greater glory of the Church a variety of purely secular motives.

The Crusades may be viewed as part of the age-long warfare between east and west. This warfare is as ancient as the struggle between the Greeks and the Persians and as modern as the campaigns of General Allenby in Palestine and General Maude in Mesopotamia. It is only partly religious in character.

They may also be viewed as a continuation or revival of the old Viking spirit of adventure. It is notable that the Norman colonists in France and in Sicily played a leading part from the first. These were the latest and most enthusiastic converts to Christianity, and their enthusiasm expressed itself both in the architecture of their cathedrals and in the adventures of their Crusades.

Again, the Crusades have an important commercial aspect. The rising Italian seaports, Venice and Genoa, wanted to open

up trade with the east, and a Christian kingdom of Jerusalem stretching from the port of Joppa to the northern extremity of the Red Sea furnished them with just the sort of 'Suez Canal' that they required. Indeed it may be said that religious enthusiasm, though it conquered Jerusalem, could never have held it for nearly a hundred years but for the 'sinews of war' supplied by these traders for their own commercial purposes.

None the less, it was religious enthusiasm that gave the Crusades their splendid and romantic character. A crusade may be defined simply as an 'armed pilgrimage,' a 'Pilgrim's Progress' grown into a 'Holy War.'[1] The idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land had grown increasingly popular since the time when Jerome had translated the Scriptures in his monastery at Bethlehem. The Church had seized upon the idea and made pilgrimage, whether to Jerusalem or some other holy shrine, a part of its system of penances, whereby members of the Church paid the penalty for their sins, escaped the penalty of excommunication, or obtained merit in God's eyes. Pilgrimage was a popular and agreeable form of penance, combining spiritual benefits with the joys of travel. The characters in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are pilgrims travelling to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, but their spirit is that of holiday makers rather than penitents. (But the *Canterbury Tales* belong to a later and less religious age.) How much more popular would be a penance which afforded not only the gentle pleasures of travel but also the fiercer delights of battle with God's enemies! If the Crusader fell in battle, then the glory of one who laid down his life for his Church would certainly not be less than that of one who to-day lays down his life for his country.

It has often been noticed that nothing unites a country so effectively as a foreign war, if the war be just. So nothing did so much to unite Christendom under the Papacy as the Crusades. They were, in fact, papal foreign policy. It was

[1] Barker, "Crusades," article in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

natural that the kings at first stood aloof from them. No kings went on the first and greatest Crusade. Sullenly they watched the Pope playing the part of Pied Piper and leading off the best and bravest of their subjects on a cause they could not openly oppose. Later they found it best to fall in with the movement they could not check. The second and third Crusade are led by kings and emperors.

In 637 Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Mohammedans, but these Arab conquerors were tolerant and pilgrimages increased unimpeded. The position was changed when the first wave of Turkish invaders reached the Mediterranean. In 1071 these Seljukian Turks (to be distinguished from the Ottoman Turks of the Modern 'Turkey' who do not appear till after the Crusades are over) conquered Asia Minor from the Eastern Roman Emperors. In 1076 they occupied Jerusalem.

Between these two events Hildebrand had become Pope (1073) as Gregory VII. The Emperor appealed to him for help. Gregory formed schemes, not for a Crusade but for a great expedition of the west to succour the eastern empire. By this means he hoped to bring about the reunion of the eastern and western Churches under the Papacy. Nothing came of this scheme. The Crusades when they were launched went straight for Jerusalem, and, far from helping the eastern Emperor in his difficulties, quarrelled with him. It is possible that Gregory's policy was the wiser and that the indirect approach to Jerusalem might have led to the best results in the long run. Still, no appeal for the succour of Constantinople could have struck the chord of religious enthusiasm which launched Christendom on Jerusalem in frontal attack.

The Pope who launched the first Crusade was Urban II. (1088-1099), a Frenchman whom Gregory had singled out as a worthy successor to himself. During most of his life he was an exile from Rome, where Gregory's old enemy, Henry IV., set up a rival or 'anti-pope.' The Crusade was preached

at Clermont in 1095 in the south of France, and cries of 'Deus vult' (God wills it) burst forth from a vast congregation representing every rank of society.

(ii) *The course of the Crusades* (1095-1272). We have no space here for the great pageant of military history which stretches over the next two centuries, ending only thirty years before the collapse of the Papacy itself at Anagni. But an outline of events is necessary to show how this religious impulse fared when put to the test of practice. After the first Crusade it will be found rather a melancholy story. Where worldly motives conflicted with religious the worldly usually got the upper hand, and finally the movement was destroyed by the growing worldliness of the Papacy itself.

The First Crusade (1095-1099) really includes two Crusades, the Crusade of the people and the Crusade of the princes. The Crusade of the people is a pathetic and horrible story. Ignorant and enthusiastic preachers, such as Peter the Hermit, set forth from Clermont and gathered around themselves vast crowds of vagabonds and fanatics. The call of 'Jerusalem' acted upon them like strong drink. Some fell upon the Jews and are said to have massacred ten thousand in the valley of the Rhine. Two great bands reached Constantinople, sadly diminished by the way. The Emperor shipped them across the straits, to preserve the peace of his own capital, and they were at once annihilated by the Turks.

Meanwhile, the princes with their armies gathered at Constantinople, where they were soon involved in quarrels with the Emperor, who claimed that the prospective conquests must be regarded as his territory and themselves as his vassals. Urban had appointed a bishop as leader, but the real direction of the enterprise quickly passed to an able and ambitious Norman, Bohemund, who regarded the whole enterprise less in the spirit of a Crusader than in that of a modern empire-builder. On reaching Antioch Bohemund carved out a kingdom for himself and took no further interest

in Jerusalem. However, the religious enthusiasm of the majority successfully asserted itself under the leadership of a true Crusading knight, Godfrey de Bouillon. In July, 1099, Jerusalem fell: a terrible slaughter followed, more worthy of the fierce religion of the Book of *Joshua* than of the faith of Christ. It was Islam that had first preached the Holy War. The Christian Church had adopted the methods of its rival and won its revenge. Godfrey de Bouillon died the next year, and his brother Baldwin became the first King of Jerusalem.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem (1100-1187) and the *Second Crusade* (1147). The Kingdom of Jerusalem suffered from many inevitable handicaps. The adventurous qualities which made a good Crusader were by no means the qualities most useful in the difficult task of establishing orderly government in an oriental colony. From the beginning the worst vices of feudalism were conspicuous, anarchy and brutality, and the kings proved quite unable to control their vassals. The two great Crusading orders of knighthood, the Templars and Hospitallers, were among the worst offenders. In all periods, not least in our own, it has proved difficult for white races to preserve their moral standards in their dealings with races they regard as 'inferior.' The difficulty was greatly increased by the fact that in this case the whites regarded the natives as 'infidels,' and found, even in their religion, excuses for every kind of wickedness in their treatment of them. "Islam," a modern historian writes, "might have endured a kingdom of infidels; it could not endure a kingdom of brigands." In the words of a contemporary, "The Crusaders forsook God before God forsook them."

The success of the first Crusade owed something to the fact that the Mohammedans happened at that date to be weak and divided. Now a strong power was rising again under Zengi at Mosul on the upper Tigris. In 1144 he captured the Christian outpost of Edessa on the upper Euphrates. This disaster was the occasion of the second Crusade.

The second Crusade, though led by the Emperor Conrad and the French King, Louis VII., was a miserable failure, partly owing to the incompetence of its leaders, and partly because many of the Crusaders never came to Palestine at all. The idea that there might be other and easier 'crusades' than that of Jerusalem boded ill for the Christian colony. The Germans were allowed to fulfil their Crusading vows by attacking the heathen Wends on their Baltic coast, and the English and Flemings landed at Lisbon and stormed that city of the Moors, thus founding the Christian Kingdom of Portugal.

Meanwhile the kingdom of Zengi grew under his son, Nureddin. Nureddin's general Saladin conquered Egypt, and destroyed the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187.

Third Crusade (1189-1192). It so happened that when Jerusalem fell there was no great Pope to rise to the occasion. The third Crusade was planned by three of the greatest Kings of the Middle Ages, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Philip Augustus of France, and Henry II. of England. Henry II. died before the expedition was launched, and the Emperor was drowned in Cilicia on the way out: the two great figures are therefore Philip Augustus and Henry's son, Richard Cœur de Lion. Now England and France were deadly enemies: Philip, a cool, calculating statesman, knew well enough that the main business of his reign was to be the expulsion of the English rulers from France and consolidation of his own kingdom. These rivalries they carried with them to the east. Each supported rival pretenders to the throne of Jerusalem: each was backed for commercial purposes by a rival Italian seaport.

Much more remarkable, however, were the changed relations between Christian and Infidel. To the first Crusaders, the Saracens had been simply devils to whom no quarter should be given. But a century of familiarity had brought, not contempt, but a certain well-merited admiration. In many respects the Arab civilisation was far in

advance of the Christian, and Saladin was as fine a knight as any Crusader. Hence Richard pursued his end not only by war but by negotiation. He even proposed that Saladin's brother should marry his sister Joanna and rule Jerusalem as a kind of neutral state. This spirit of toleration is a fine thing, and Europe owes much to it, but its entry was the death-blow to the Crusades as a religious movement. The marriage-policy came to nothing as it happened, but when Richard left, though he had failed to enter Jerusalem as a conqueror, he had secured for the Christians the right of pilgrimage.

The later Crusades (1202-1272). The remainder of the story can be quickly told. The *Fourth Crusade*, planned by Innocent III. himself, was diverted in spite of his wishes into an attack on Constantinople, where a 'Latin Empire' was founded and lasted amidst much confusion till 1261, when the Greek dynasty reconquered the city. Meanwhile Innocent III. preached a 'crusade' against the heretic Albigensians [1] in the south of France.

The Children's Crusade of 1212 is an incredible and horrible story. A mere boy, Nicholas of Cologne, led some thousands of children into Italy, where they were kidnapped by slave dealers and sold into Egypt. The picturesque tale of "The Pied Piper" is said to have grown out of this tragedy.

The *Fifth Crusade* (1218) was an unsuccessful expedition to Egypt. The *Sixth Crusade* (1228-1229), on the other hand, was brilliantly successful, but its success had nothing to do with religion. It was the work of the great Emperor Frederick II., the arch foe of the Papacy on account of his Italian power, and also, as his conversation gave much ground for thinking, an infidel himself. The Pope, Gregory

[1] The Albigensians held the old Manichaean belief, brought back from the east. They believed that God and the Devil were equal powers struggling for the mastery of the world: also that matter, and consequently life, were essentially evil, and that suicide was not a sin. They are in no sense forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, though they have sometimes been described as such.

IX., the predecessor of Innocent IV., excommunicated him before he started, and proclaimed a 'crusade' against the Crusader. Arrived in Palestine, Frederick at once opened negotiations, and by skilfully playing upon the rivalries of his enemies induced them to concede to him a kingdom of Jerusalem embracing also Galilee and the port of Acre. When the excommunicated crusader entered Jerusalem the Holy City automatically fell under a papal interdict! Frederick's kingdom lasted till 1244; Jerusalem was then finally lost.

When Jerusalem fell Pope Innocent IV. was much more interested in his 'crusade' against Frederick than in the recovery of Jerusalem. One great king, however, was reigning at the time, the perfect Christian king of the Middle Ages, in whom the crusading fire once more blazed with all its original vigour, St. Louis of France. The *Seventh and Eighth Crusades* (1248 and 1270) were personal ventures of the French king and his followers. But the efforts of one man could not turn back the religious energies of Christendom into a channel they had already forsaken. Both expeditions are unimportant failures, the first in Egypt, the second in Tunis where Louis died. Some of his followers under the future Edward I. of England sailed on from Tunis to Palestine, where Edward was still engaged in gallant military operations when news of his father's death recalled him to England.

The Crusades were over. The following is the judgment of a modern English historian upon them.[1]

"When all is said, the Crusades remain a wonderful and perpetually astonishing act in the great drama of human life. They touched the summits of daring and devotion, if they also sank into the deep abysms of shame. Motives of self-interest may have lurked in them,—otherworldly motives of buying salvation for a little price, or worldly motives of achieving riches or acquiring lands. Yet it would be treason

[1] Barker, *op. cit.*

to the majesty of man's incessant struggle towards an ideal good, if one were to deny that in and through the Crusades men strove for righteousness' sake to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth. . . . The ages were not dark in which Christianity could gather itself together in a common cause and carry the flag of its faith to the grave of its Redeemer: nor can we but give thanks for their memory, even if for us religion is of the spirit, and Jerusalem in the heart of every man who believes in Christ."

CHAPTER XV

SAINTS AND SCHOLARS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

(i) *Abelard, Bernard, and Thomas Aquinas: Mediaeval Learning*

THE form of learning that dominated the Middle Ages is known as scholasticism. Like so much else of its day it attempted the greatest of tasks with very insufficient means. Roughly speaking, its aim is to express the whole truth of Christianity in the form of a vast logical system or theorem; to make reason the handmaid of faith. The logical system was borrowed from Aristotle, a few of whose works were known in Latin translations in the eleventh century.

The first great master of this art was the Frenchman Abelard (1079-1142). His life illustrates what must have been a common tragedy in the mediaeval Church, for he devotedly loved a beautiful and highly gifted girl named Heloïse, and the story of their love is one of the most celebrated love-tragedies of real life. His lectures at Paris drew hundreds, or rather, it is said, thousands, of students from all the country round. Indeed, they may be said to have founded the fame of the great university of Paris, of which Oxford was afterwards a kind of colony.[1] His most influential treatise was the *Sic et Non*, a collection of

[1] When Henry II. quarrelled with the King of France in 1168 he ordered English students to withdraw from Paris, and they appear to have settled at Oxford.

apparently contradictory statements from the early Christian Fathers. This collection was not made, as might be thought, with a view to exposing the unsoundness of the Fathers. Abelard believed that these apparently contradictory statements could be reconciled, since they came from an inspired source, and that it was the task of the human intellect to serve the cause of God's truth by reconciling them.

It was natural, however, that this bold appeal to the tribunal of reason should alarm many more than it attracted. Abelard found himself opposed by Bernard, who, in the last year of his life, secured his condemnation by the Pope.

If Abelard was the great radical of his age, Bernard—St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)—was the great conservative, and a more typical, though to the modern mind less interesting, figure. He was the greatest of monks, and the monastery was as much the typical institution of mediaeval Christendom as the factory is of modern Lancashire or the army of modern Prussia. For twenty years Clairvaux, his monastery, overshadowed Rome as a spiritual centre. He could of course have been Pope: he preferred to exercise greater power as a Pope-maker.

St. Bernard is typical of that anti-worldliness against which the Renaissance afterwards rose in protest. The world to him was a place of banishment and trial, where men are but strangers and pilgrims. The way of escape to Heaven had been marked out by authority long ago: it was only necessary to follow it. 'Rationalists' like Abelard were only playing the Devil's game, and breeding fresh heresies. St. Bernard was no lover of persecution: he preferred exile to death as a punishment, partly perhaps because, being less sensational, it created less sympathy for the victims. None the less, heretics were 'dogs,' and their bravery in facing death was derived from the help not of God but of the Devil.

Yet not even St. Bernard and the millions that shared his bigotry without sharing his saintliness could suppress the

free life of intellect. The great scholastic debate went its way. The greatest product of the movement was the famous *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274). Through this work St. Thomas exercised a greater and more permanent influence on the Roman Church than any writer since Augustine. It is in fact to this day the authoritative textbook of Roman Catholic theology, as is illustrated by the fact that in 1880 Pope Leo XIII. declared St. Thomas the patron saint of all Roman Catholic educational establishments.

It is impossible to make any useful summary of such a treatise here. The general principle is the same as that of Abelard : there are two sources of knowledge, revelation and reason. The channels of revelation are the Bible and the Church ; the channels of reason are the various systems of heathen philosophy. But while they are two distinct sources, they are not contradictory ; for both come alike from God.

The controversy continued after St. Thomas. One of the greatest of the later ' schoolmen ' (as the scholastic philosophers are generally called) was an Englishman from the Scottish border, Duns Scotus (1265-1308). He has obtained a popular immortality that would certainly have surprised and disappointed him. He has given his native language the word ' dunce.' When the struggle between the new classical learning and the old scholastic philosophy broke out in Oxford at the time of the Renaissance, the eager students of the new learning, such as Thomas More, called their conservative opponents ' dunces ' from the name of the author of their favourite textbook. Thus ' dunce ' does not mean a stupid or ignorant person, but a devotee of useless learning.

(ii) *Francis and Dominic: the Friars.* Among all the great figures of the Middle Ages St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) is the most lovable and the nearest to Christ, his Master. He was the son of a merchant of Assisi in northern-central

Italy, and in his youth seems to have been the leading spirit among the gay young men of the town. At the age of twenty-one he had a serious illness, during which he underwent the experience common among men of religious genius, known as 'conversion,' a suddenly deepened sense of the presence of God in the world and of His call to service. He went on a pilgrimage to Rome, and finding the usual crowd of beggars outside St. Peter's, he exchanged his clothes with one of them, and experienced an overwhelming sense of joy in spending the day begging among the rest. Later, on his return to Assisi, he met a leper who begged alms of him. Francis had always had a special horror of lepers, and he rode past turning his face away. Immediately afterwards he remembered Jesus and alighted, gave the leper all he had and kissed his hand. From that day he devoted himself to the service of the lepers and the hospitals.

These incidents give the key to his life and to the movement he set on foot. The text which was his special inspiration was:—"Everywhere on your road preach and say, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, drive out devils. Freely ye have received, freely give. Carry neither gold, nor silver, nor money in your girdles, nor bag, nor two coats, nor sandals, nor staff, for the workman is worthy of his hire." His aim was a literal imitation of the life of the earliest disciples. In 1209 he went with eleven friends to Rome and secured from the great Innocent III. the recognition of the new order, the Fratres Minores, Lesser Brothers, commonly called Friars (brothers) or Mendicants (beggars).

In later years Francis felt the call to preach the gospel to the heathen. He went to Egypt at the time of the wretchedly unsuccessful fifth Crusade (1219), got himself taken prisoner and was led before the Sultan, to whom he publicly preached the gospel. The Sultan gallantly sent him back to the Christian camp and he afterwards spent a year in Palestine, but without achieving any results.

The most striking feature of his character, as of that of the first Christians, was his joyousness. He loved music, and, like the English poet Blake, sang on his death-bed. He loved all living things and, with gentle humour, called all things his brothers and sisters, not only animals and birds but sun and moon, wind and fire. He is said to have preached a sermon to the birds, which is after all no more ridiculous than writing poems to them, and therefore not ridiculous at all, provided the sermon was a suitable one. On his deathbed he quaintly apologised to 'brother ass, the body,' for all the hardships he had inflicted on it.

The fame of the Spanish Dominic (1170-1221) has been overshadowed by that of Francis, and indeed he was cast more in the common mediaeval mould. His first important work was to preach Christianity to the Albigensian heretics. During the latter part of his ten years' mission the horrible crusade against these heretics was in full blast. Dominic seems to have approved the crusade, but only on account of the unwillingness of the heretics to accept conversion, whereas many of the crusaders were actuated by motives of vulgar land-grabbing. His order of 'Preaching Friars' was formed, a few years later than that of Francis and largely in imitation of it, from among his associates in the Albigensian mission.

Both orders spread with amazing rapidity, and during the lifetimes of their founders had already many thousands of members scattered over every country in Europe. In fact they enlisted the religious enthusiasm which a hundred years earlier had gone into the first Crusade. They devoted themselves not only to work among the poor and the sick, but also to learning and teaching. Schoolmen like St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, and also their contemporary, Roger Bacon, the greatest scientific genius of the Middle Ages, were friars. Both orders also contained an order for women. The first friars to reach England (1221) came barefooted and destitute of the commonest necessities, and in no country did they do more good. In almost every town

arose a priory and a chapel, planted in the poorest quarters which the ordinary clergy generally left severely alone. Their first houses were built of mud and timber, and their food was vegetables, porridge, and cheap ale. When gifts and legacies flowed in they were invested under trustees. The monks and parish priests watched jealously, and eagerly noted any falling from their high ideals. No doubt all friars were not Francises, but it is probably fair to say that for about a hundred years they worked in such a manner as to put most other Christians of their time to shame.

In popular speech the various orders of Friars came to be called after the colours of the long cloaks which they wore as uniforms. Thus the Franciscans were Grey-friars, the Dominicans Black-friars, and a later order, the Carmelites, White-friars. These names still persist as street names, and mark the sites of their priories in many of our cities, *e.g.* Blackfriars Bridge.

(iii) *Dante* (1265-1321). When a great period of history is drawing to a close it is sometimes the privilege of a great poet to sum up its character in a great work of art. Thus Shakespeare gave, in his comedies, his histories, and his tragedies, the completest expression, in an idealised form, of the gaiety, the energy and patriotism, and the deep strivings and aspirations of the heroic age of Elizabeth. Thus also Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*,[1] has left us a monument expressing the peculiar character of mediaeval Christendom, a monument as stately and as expressive as the Gothic cathedrals.

Dante was a Florentine, and a vigorous actor in the stormy politics of his city, which, though owing nominal allegiance to the Emperor, was actually an independent republic. In

[1] Dante called his poem a Comedy for two reasons: first because it has a happy ending, since it records a pilgrimage through Hell and Purgatory to Heaven; secondly, because it is written in Italian, the language of common speech, and not in Latin. The epithet 'Divine' was added not by Dante but by his admirers.

1302 he was sentenced to perpetual banishment as the result of a civil war in which his party was defeated. His great epic was written during the nineteen years of exile and wandering that followed.

The poem consists of three Books, entitled *Inferno* (Hell), *Purgatorio* (Purgatory) and *Paradiso* (Paradise),[1] and records the visionary journey of the poet through all the regions of that Other World upon which mediaeval thought brooded so deeply. On the first two stages of his journey his guide is the poet Virgil, honoured above all classical poets in the Middle Ages because in one of his poems, the *Fourth Eclogue*, he was supposed to have foretold the coming of Christ. In Heaven his guide is Beatrice, the Florentine lady whom he had once loved, who had died before the time of his exile.

To the modern mind the most extraordinary feature of Dante's poem is the precise detail with which he invests his descriptions of these shadowy worlds. For us Heaven and Hell, however real they may be to us, have no place in the maps of our atlases or the charts of our astronomers. Dante fits the seen and the unseen worlds into a single scheme. The Earth is the centre of the Universe, and is divided into a land hemisphere and a water hemisphere. In the centre of the land hemisphere is placed Jerusalem. Hell is conceived as a Pit shaped like a funnel and stretching to the very centre of the Earth, the upper or broad end of the funnel lying immediately under the crust of the land hemisphere. From the centre of Hell a narrow passage leads through to the surface of the Earth at the centre of the water hemisphere, that is to say the antipodes of Jerusalem. Here is Purgatory, an island mountain with the Garden of Eden, the Terrestrial Paradise, on its summit. Above the top of this mountain and stretched in a series of spheres all round the Earth is

[1] Each Book is divided into thirty-three cantos, and contains about 4500 lines. The total length of the poem is about the same as that of the *Iliad*, and half as long again as the *Aeneid* or *Paradise Lost*.

Heaven. Dante here makes use of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, as worked out at Alexandria in the second century A.D., and generally accepted till overthrown by the researches of Copernicus, Kepler and Newton in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[1] The Earth is conceived as encased in a series of hollow revolving spheres, the first containing the orbit along which the Moon circles round the Earth, the second that of Mercury, the third that of Venus, the fourth that of the Sun, the fifth that of Mars, the sixth that of Jupiter, the seventh that of Saturn, the eighth that of the Fixed Stars, the ninth the Starless Crystalline Heaven, which is the root of Time and Change, and, so to speak, the centre of the energy of the whole Universe. In Dante's poem, each of these spheres is allotted to an order of angels and to a particular type of virtue as displayed on earth. Outside them all is a tenth heaven, the motionless, boundless Empyrean. Here, too, the saints and angels of the lower spheres are also present, grouped in the form of a Rose about the presence of God Himself.

Hell is divided into nine circles, in each of which a special type of sinner receives eternal punishment appropriate to his sin. Dante sees, as he passes, both his Florentine contemporaries and the famous men and women of old, and often converses with them. It is notable that several of the Popes are to be found in Hell, Innocent IV., for instance, who preferred political to spiritual power, as well as his great rival the Emperor Frederick II. At the centre is Satan himself, tearing and mauling to all eternity the three worst traitors, Judas Iscariot, Brutus and Cassius. For, in the great mediaeval controversy between Papacy and Empire, Dante was an Imperialist. Caesar was to him second only to Christ, and in the re-establishment of a Roman Empire

[1] Milton also uses the Ptolemaic system in *Paradise Lost*, though most scientists had in his day abandoned it. Bacon was one of the last great thinkers to cling to it.

he saw the only hope for the good ordering of God's Kingdom on Earth.

Purgatory, again, is divided into circles, each with its appropriate punishment; but here we are mounting up: hope has replaced despair; punishment is purification and is gladly received. The prisoners of Purgatory will, when their term is served, pass upward to Heaven.

Purgatory played a larger part in the practical religion of the Middle Ages than either Heaven or Hell. Only great saints went, it was supposed, direct to Heaven: and Hell was reserved for unbelievers and exceptional sinners. 'Ordinary people' would, it was assumed, spend long ages in Purgatory doing penance for sins on earth, and thereby fitting themselves for Heaven. Could the prayers of those on earth avail to help loved ones in Purgatory? It was assumed that they could, and on this simple and touching faith was gradually built up the vast system of sale and purchase of Indulgences, whereby you could buy, either for your own benefit or for others, remittance of so many years or thousands of years penance in purgatory.

The Reformation began with Luther's protest against the sale of these Indulgences in 1517, and the Reformers refused to believe in the very existence of Purgatory—"Purgatory Pick-purse," as the English Latimer called it. So in the Reformed Churches the choice was between Hell and Heaven, and that was no doubt one of the causes of the prominence of Hell-fire, the morbid delight in depicting the supposed tortures of the damned, which was characteristic of the Puritan and Evangelical type of preaching until the middle of the nineteenth century.

(iv) *Saints of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Suso, Thomas à Kempis, Richard Rolle, St. Catherine of Siena, Savonarola.* In the next chapter will be shown how, with the downfall of Boniface VIII. (1303, a year after Dante's exile from Florence), the Papacy, and with it the Church

itself as an institution, entered on a long period of decay and discredit which only terminated in the storms of the Reformation. None the less this period, so dismal from the point of view of the general history of the Church, was graced by many saintly lives. Yet there is a marked difference between the fate of these religious geniuses and that of their predecessors in the heyday of the Mediaeval Church. Anselm, Bernard, Francis, and Dominic sowed their seed in a fruitful soil: the tide of popular admiration bore them along: they became great historical figures. Men, perhaps equally gifted, in the period we now enter upon, meet no such reception: they struggle against the tide: their admirers are a few chosen spirits like themselves. Their permanent effect upon society is hard to trace, and their lives belong more to Christian biography than to Christian history in the wider sense.

The fourteenth century has been described as the classical age of Christian mysticism. A mystic is one who enjoys, or believes that he enjoys, the religious experience of communion with God in an altogether special degree. By means of ecstatic vision he sees and knows what others can only dimly feel and cling to with the aid of faith, authority, or tradition. In fourteenth century Germany, which was continually ravaged with civil war and plague, there were many small societies of mystics, both men and women, situated far apart and grouped each around some honoured leader, but kept in touch with one another by wandering prophets, who carried letters from group to group. One of these mystics, the Blessed Henry Suso, has left, among other writings, a charming autobiography.[1]

There is much in Suso's life that strikes the modern reader as strange and morbid. He carried to an extreme point the practice of self-torture, lacerating his body by carrying on his bare back a heavy cross studded with nails and needles.

[1] *The Life of Blessed Henry Suso* (translated), with Introduction by Dean Inge (Methuen & Co.).

The God he loves is to us an incredibly cruel God. Even after Suso has been warned in a vision to abandon (after more than twenty years) his self-inflicted tortures, he believes that the many undeserved misfortunes that fell upon him were sent by God for his special trial and benefit. Only at the end of his life did God "gladden the heart of the sufferer in return for all his sufferings with inward peace of heart, so that he praised God with all his heart for his past suffering."

In Suso, in fact, we see a man striving to live by a perverted monkish religion, and continually led by his own beautiful nature to rise above (rather than fall below) his religious principles. He writes "Sit in thy cell; it will teach thee all things," and "Live as if there were no other creature on earth but thyself." Yet we see him, once his period of self-torture is over, following not his principles but his Master, and going about among the poor, gladdening simple and sinful hearts by his transparent goodness.

Like St. Francis, he had all the instincts of a poet. "It was his custom" (he writes of himself) "to go into his chapel after matins [1] and sitting down upon his chair to take a little rest. He sat there but a short time until the watchman announced the break of day; when, opening his eyes, he used to fall at once upon his knees and salute the rising morning star, heaven's gentle Queen, with this intention that, as the little birds in summer greet the daylight and receive it joyously, even so did he mean to greet with joyful longings her who brings the light of the everlasting day; and he did not merely say these words, but he accompanied them with a sweet still melody in his soul."

The greatest masterpiece of this mystical literature is the famous *Imitation of Christ*, which has been translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible. Its author, Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), was a man otherwise so simple minded and obscure that his authorship has been

[1] A service held in monasteries immediately after midnight.

doubted, and the book attributed to the great ecclesiastical statesman Gerson (see p. 200): but for these doubts there is apparently no good ground. Born at Kempen, in western Germany, he spent the last seventy-two years of his long life as a monk in the Augustinian convent at Zwolle on the eastern side of the Zuyder Zee. The convent was poor and the monks earned their living by copying devotional books for sale (it was before the days of printing). Never did any man live more ignorant of the world outside the convent walls:—a cheerful but shy little man, with soft brown eyes; fond of little jokes and puns; going about the ordinary business of life with bent back, but standing upright and even rising upon his tiptoes during the singing of the psalms; a fine example of the truth of the text which declares that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise."

England was not without its mystics in this period, one of the most notable being Richard Rolle, of Hampole, near Doncaster (? 1290-1349). Richard Rolle was sent to Oxford at the expense of one of the famous Neville family, to which his father was attached; but he cared not for philosophy, and on his return home made himself a hermit's dress out of two kirtles belonging to his sister and took to a wandering life. He carefully cultivated his powers of supernatural vision, and has left a precise account of the progressive stages of his insight. His devotional writings attained a wide popularity, particularly *The Mending of Life*, of which five separate translations in different English dialects were made from the Latin original, a fact which has, it need hardly be said, an interest for the student of the development of the English language.

One of the most striking figures of the fourteenth century is Catherine of Siena (1347-1380). She was the daughter of a dyer, and began to practise religious exercises of self-denial of her own choice at an incredibly early age, and when seven years old solemnly dedicated her virginity to Christ. This

seems absurd and unattractive to the modern reader, but St. Catherine grew up to exercise her saintliness in the most admirable and practical manner. She worked among the victims of the plague: she more than once healed bitter family feuds which were the curse of the north Italian aristocracy: above all, she sought to end what was called the "Babylonish Captivity" of the Papacy, and bring back the Popes from Avignon (whither they had moved in 1305) to Rome. First by correspondence and afterwards by a pilgrimage to Avignon she succeeded in persuading Gregory XI. (1370-1378) to come to Rome. Her object seemed attained when Gregory died and an Italian successor (Urban VI.) was elected in the Holy City. But Urban proved a ferocious despot, and his cardinals fled to Avignon and elected a rival. Thus the Captivity was followed by the Schism, and St. Catherine wore herself to death in vain efforts to curb the intractable temper of her Roman Pope. She is the Jeanne Darc of Papal history.

The last, the most romantic, and the most tragic of the great men in whom burned the spirit of the old mediaeval Christianity was Fra Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498). Growing up in the midst of the brilliant achievements of the Italian Renaissance, he entered a monastery at the age of twenty-two, having first written a treatise *On Contempt for the World*. Called to be prior of the convent of St. Mark at Florence, he openly defied the rule of Lorenzo dei Medici, the uncrowned king of that brilliant republic. Even Lorenzo was impressed, for on his death-bed (1492) he summoned his great enemy to give him absolution. Savonarola refused unless Lorenzo would give back to Florence the freedom of which the tyranny of his family had for seventy years deprived her. Lorenzo would not consent, and Savonarola left him to die unabsolved.

As a preacher Savonarola exercised amazing influence and, modelling himself on the Hebrew prophets, he undertook to direct from the pulpit the foreign politics of his city. He

welcomed the French invasion of 1494, seeing in the invaders the rod of God's anger,[1] and thus raised up for himself a host of enemies. After the confusion caused by the passage of the French army, a revolution established a democratic constitution, and for the next four years Savonarola was the real ruler of Florence. The city was transformed. The bread of the poor and not the artistic masterpieces of the rich became the first concern. A city of Cavaliers was turned into a city of Puritans, as the Middle Ages would have understood Puritanism. Husbands and wives quitted their homes for convents; marriage became an awful and scarcely permitted rite. Most remarkable was Savonarola's power over the young, of whom he formed a kind of sacred militia with its own officers, charged with the enforcement of his rules for a holy life.[2] The gay and licentious annual carnival was replaced by a picturesque religious festival. At the carnival of 1496 the citizens gave their costliest possessions in alms to the poor, and tonsured monks, crowned with flowers, sang praises and performed dances to the glory of God. At the carnival of 1497 was celebrated the famous "burning of the vanities." A Venetian merchant offered 22,000 gold florins for the pile of objects of art destined for the flames, and the authorities not only rejected his offer but added his portrait to the pile.

It could not last. Perhaps there was from the beginning something hysterical and unsound in this strange protest against the spirit of the age. Savonarola's government had many enemies on political grounds, and its bitterest was Alexander VI., the most notoriously wicked of all the Popes. Savonarola was excommunicated and ordered to come to Rome. He refused, and issued an appeal to all Christendom demanding the deposition by a General Council of the unworthy Pope. The Franciscans sided with the Pope, and

[1] Compare Isaiah's attitude to Assyria, Part I., p. 33.

[2] A not altogether fanciful parallel might be drawn between this and the Boy Scouts.

Savonarola's influence was undermined. It is impossible to tell here the strange and complicated story of his downfall. He was arrested, tortured, and after a scandalous mockery of a trial, condemned to death and executed.[1]

Thus perished the last great mediaeval Christian at the hands of the most degraded of the Renaissance Popes. Less than twenty years separates the death of Savonarola from the outbreak of the Lutheran revolution.

[1] There is an impressive account of Savonarola in George Eliot's novel, *Romola.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MEDIAEVAL CHURCH (1305-1517)

(i) *Captivity, Schism, and Rebellion* (1305-1414) [1]

FROM 1305 to 1378, following upon the kidnapping of Boniface VIII., the Popes resided at Avignon in the south of France, the despised tools of the French kings. The period is sometimes called the 'Babylonish Captivity' of the Papacy. The first conspicuous act of these Popes was to co-operate with the French king in one of the worst crimes of history, the destruction of the Templars. The Templars had, it is true, degenerated: they had become exceedingly wealthy bankers, and as such were owed vast sums by the French king and his nobility. Hence their suppression would mean a cancelling of debts. The pretext chosen was heresy, and it is likely enough that the Templars had brought back some unchristian notions from the east. From 1307 to 1312 a series of criminal investigations were carried out, with the aid of torture and burnings at the stake, which surpass the most lurid efforts of Judge Jeffreys. In 1312 the order was suppressed and their wealth passed, nominally to their rivals the Hospitallers, actually for the most part to the French king and other lay creditors.

In 1378 one of these Avignon Popes died while on a visit to Rome. The Romans rose and compelled the cardinals to

[1] The narrative here recommences at the point where it was left at the end of Chapter XIII.

elect a Roman Pope on the spot. Their unwilling choice was Urban VI., a fiery old man, who proceeded to browbeat them so vigorously that with the encouragement of the French king the cardinals fled to Avignon, declared their previous election void as carried out under pressure, and proceeded to elect a Frenchman, Clement VII. Thus from 1378 to 1414 there were two Popes, each denouncing the other as the emissary of the Devil, and each striving to extract from his supporters as much revenue as previous Popes had extracted from the whole of western Christendom. The principle of the Balance of Power was already in vogue in Europe, though the name was not yet invented. France, Scotland and Spain supported Avignon : England, Germany and Italy supported Rome.

Thus Christendom cried out for reform : but reform was no easy matter. It is never easy to reform, without destroying, any ancient institution. Much more difficult was it when the institution claimed Divine Authority, and its subjects were divided into hostile nationalities. Roughly speaking there were (and always are) two methods of reform : one, by creating new institutions to supplement or supersede the old : the other, by developing new ideas, which infuse a new spirit into the old institutions. Of course these two methods overlap, but it is convenient to treat them separately. The first, new institutions, is treated in the second section of this chapter, dealing with the Conciliar movement. We will in this section limit ourselves to the project of reform through a change of ideas.

With the Papacy at Avignon in French hands it is natural to look to England as a centre of discontent. Crecy and Poitiers were fought during the ' Captivity,' and the Papacy might well appear to the patriotic Englishman as an enemy institution. Edward III.'s Parliaments passed laws forbidding the Papacy to nominate holders of English livings (Statute of Provisors, 1351), and forbidding appeals to Rome (Statute of Praemunire, 1353). Chaucer, the first great

national poet, holds up monks, friars, and papal pardoners (sellers of indulgences or exemptions from the penalties of sin), to endless ridicule in his *Canterbury Tales* (about 1384). Langland, less humorous and ironical but more earnest and severe, tells the same tale in his *Piers Plowman.* But all this was merely destructive. What was wanted was a great religious philosopher and statesman who would diagnose the disease of the Church and prescribe the remedy. The first great attempt to do this was made by John Wycliffe.

Wycliffe (1320-1384) was a Yorkshireman, and Master of Balliol College, Oxford. The burning question of the day was papal taxation which, when the country was impoverished by a long war, drew off wealth year by year to ' the sinful city of Avenon ' as Englishmen called it. Wycliffe roundly declared that the wealth of the Church was its curse, that what was good for the Friars would be good for the Pope and his hierarchy,—namely poverty. This theory was seized upon with delight by John of Gaunt and the war party, and for a year or so Wycliffe became their favourite pamphleteer. The Pope, at the instance of the Archbishop of Canterbury, condemned his doctrine, but that did not prevent the government consulting him afresh on papal taxation (1378). He replied, " The Pope cannot demand this treasure except by way of alms, and since all charity begins at home, it would be a work not of charity but of foolishness to direct the alms of the realm abroad when the realm itself lies in need of them." This he followed up by a pamphlet *Concerning the Duty of the King*, in which he declared that the Church was a national institution under the king's control and that it lay with the king to reform it.

So far Wycliffe had dealt solely with the political aspects of the Church; but it was already clear to him that these revolutionary political ideas involved a revolution in the wider and deeper sphere of theology, the theory of man's relation to God. The whole mediaeval Church was based on the assumption that the priest was a necessary and

divinely instituted mediator between man and God; that God could not be fully known to man except through the instrumentality of the priesthood. Was this true? It is the fundamental question that to this day divides Catholic and Protestant schools of thought. Wycliffe gives the Protestant answer, 'no.' "Crown and cloth make no priest," he says, "nor the Emperor's bishop,[1] with his words, but power that Christ giveth, and thus by life are priests known." It follows from this that the only true priest is the good man. Of the sacrament of the Mass he said that the priest performs no miracle of turning bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Only true worshippers receive the body and blood; the rest receive but bread and wine.[2]

In fact, this revolutionary thinker denied that the mediaeval Church with its Pope and bishops was the Church of Christ at all. The Church of Christ is the community of all true Christians, and its organisation is not a matter of Divine institution but of human convenience. In place of the visible Church as the centre of authority he set up the Bible, of which he made in part the first English translation.

But the Wycliffe who wrote thus in the last few years of his life was no longer the ally of John of Gaunt. Politically, he had gone out into the wilderness, and become the founder of the first 'protestant' sect, the Lollards. Persecution of the Lollards began in 1401 when Sawtry, the first English Protestant martyr, was burned at the stake. The Lollards never looked like winning the bulk of English people, but they survived till the Reformation, a visible demonstration that there was a 'Christianity outside Christendom.'

Wycliffe was a typical 'don.' Though he translated part of the Bible into English, his most important original works were written in Latin, and he had none of the gifts of a popular leader. Oddly enough it was not in England but far away in Bohemia that Wycliffism kindled a flame of revolt that threw all Christendom into a panic.

[1] *I.e.* the Pope. [2] See note at end of this section.

Bohemia was, until as part of Czecho-Slovakia it gained independence after the Great War, a kind of German Ireland, a wedge of Slavonic population thrust up between German Saxony and German Austria. Thus a nationalist question came in to complicate and embitter the religious dispute. John Hus (1373-1415) was not an original thinker like Wycliffe, but was converted to Wycliffism by reading some of Wycliffe's pamphlets which had been brought to his university of Prag. He was, however, a great popular preacher, and a leader in the movement to turn the university of Prag into a national Slavonic institution and oust German control. In 1411 Hus was excommunicated and Prag laid under an interdict—without any results beyond intensifying enthusiasm for reform. Hus made open-air speeches, attacking indulgences, and was carried shoulder high through the streets of the city.

Such was the position when, in 1414, Christendom made the immense experiment of attempting the reform of the Church by means of a General Council.

Note on the Catholic doctrine concerning the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament. The doctrine against which Wycliffe protested is known as transubstantiation. It is based on a now obsolete distinction drawn by mediaeval philosophy between the 'substance,' or inner invisible nature, of a thing, and its 'accidents,' or the material form and qualities in which its substance was embodied. According to Catholic doctrine, while the 'accidents,' *i.e.* the material form and quality, of the bread and wine remained, the 'substance' was by consecration transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. Traces of this doctrine can be found in the earliest Christian writings, but the language of the Fathers is conflicting, and passages from their writings can be cited both in support of the 'real presence' of Christ's Body and Blood, and against it. The subject was regarded as matter for controversy in the early Middle Ages, and the orthodox Roman doctrine was not defined until the Lateran Council of Innocent III. (1215).

(ii) *The Councils of Constance and Basel* (1414-1460). Seeing the Church thus brought to the very brink of ruin by

schism and rebellion, men naturally searched history to see if it could suggest any means of deliverance. We have already seen how, at the time of the Arian heresy, the Emperor Constantine summoned a General Council at Nicaea, attended by as many of the bishops of Christendom as were able to be present.[1] Between that date (325) and 869 seven more such General or Ecumenical [2] Councils, were summoned by eastern Emperors to meet at or near Constantinople. They were not exactly organs of self-government, but rather, like most mediaeval parliaments, a means whereby the monarch sounded public opinion and issued his own commands. Then after a long interval the practice of holding General Councils had been revived by the Popes of the great period, who now claimed the position previously occupied by the Emperors. Four Councils were held at the Lateran (the papal palace in Rome), the first in 1123, and the last in 1215 under Innocent III. Could not this tradition of a General Council be revived to heal the wounds of the Church? It was hardly possible that either of the rival Popes should summon it, but there was still a 'Roman Emperor' in the west, even though there was nothing Roman about him except his title. He might summon a General Council, in which the wisdom and conscience of Christendom, guided by the Holy Spirit, might find a way out and reform the Church.

We are, in fact, about to study an attempt to apply to the government of the Church that parliamentary system which was already playing such an important part in English history.[3] The great university of Paris took the lead in pressing the idea, and two of its doctors, D'Ailly and Gerson, proved themselves the wisest and most influential leaders of the Council when it met at Constance.

[1] Three hundred and eighteen are said to have been present, and I have failed to discover what proportion of the whole number this would be. Of course the east was much more fully represented than the west.

[2] Ecumenical (Greek, *ἡ οἰκουμένη γῆ*, the inhabited world) is the correct term, and means no more than General.

[3] *E.g.* Richard II. deposed by Act of Parliament, 1399.

The action of Christendom was hastened by the conduct of the two rival sets of cardinals. After quarrelling with their respective Popes they combined to summon a 'Council'[1] at Pisa in 1409. About eighty bishops attended. They declared both Popes deposed and elected a new one, who died almost immediately. They then elected another, one Cardinal Cossa, who took the name of John XXIII. Now Cossa was, by training and profession, a pirate of great energy and ability, who had migrated from sea to land, become a captain of mercenary troops, and lent his valuable aid to the Church. So there were now three Popes instead of two, and one of them was 'Barabbas.'

This was not at all what Christendom wanted. All the more thoughtful could see that the schism itself was but the outward sign of grave shortcomings in the Church, and what was needed was not merely a deposition of Popes but a thorough reform 'in head and members.' Here the Emperor, Sigismund, came to the rescue. Pope John was at war with the King of Naples and turned for help to the Emperor, who persuaded him to summon a General Council at which the Emperor was to preside. The Council was to meet, not in Italy, where corrupt influences would be strong, but at Constance, as a natural centre of western Christendom as a whole. Pope John fell into the trap and consented.

The Council of Constance (1414-1418) is perhaps the most impressive, and in its ultimate failure the most tragic, incident in European history. It is the first great international Congress of Europe, and as such it can be compared with the Congress of Vienna after the downfall of Napoleon, or the Congress of Versailles at the end of the Great War. But at those modern congresses Europe was sharply divided into two groups, and the victors met to dictate terms to the vanquished. At Constance, the representatives of the nations met to co-operate in the highest of all human endeavours, the restoration of the Church. We shall not see the like of the

[1] This Council is not recognised as a true Council of the Church.

Council of Constance again until the Churches are reunited and the League of Nations has become a splendid reality.

The number of strangers present in Constance during the Council seems to have varied from 100,000 to 50,000. 30,000 horses were stalled in the city. How food and accommodation were provided for all these visitors, seeing that the normal population of the town was about 8000, is one of the mysteries of history. Excellent order was preserved by 2000 "special constables," though it appears that 500 people were drowned in the lake! There were present twenty-nine cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, 150 bishops, 100 abbots, 300 doctors of theology, 100 dukes and earls, and 2400 knights.[1]

Who was to vote? Pope John wished to confine the voting to bishops and abbots, as had been done at previous councils. He created fifty new bishops for the purpose. Gerson and D'Ailly pointed out the importance of the universities, and got the vote extended to doctors of law and theology. Sigismund, properly recognising that the Church is the concern of the laity as well as the clergy, extended it to kings, princes, and their ambassadors.[2]

A still more important question was, *How* should the Council vote? If all had sat and voted in a single assembly, Italy with its immense gangs of conservative-minded ecclesiastics would have carried the day. So it was decided that the Council should sit and vote in five 'nations,' Italy, Germany, France, England, and Spain, and that decision should be by majority of nations. This proposal was first made by an English bishop, Hallam of Salisbury.

[1] Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, i. p. 313.

[2] Sigismund was not a great man, and as President of the Council he showed a rather ridiculous vanity. Still, he did well on the whole, and historians have laughed at him more than he deserves. His chief trouble was lack of money. He borrowed and begged extensively from the wealthier German princes, and one of these, Frederic of Hohenzollern, had to be rewarded with the gift of the Duchy of Brandenburg. Thus the Council of Constance first brought the Hohenzollerns to the central province of what afterwards became the Kingdom of Prussia.

The programme of the Council fell under three heads: (i) to restore unity, (ii) to reform the Church in head and members, (iii) to purge the Church of erroneous doctrines.

The first was fairly easily accomplished. When John XXIII. found all turning against him he ran away. He was brought back a prisoner and accepted his deposition, as did the aged Roman Pope, Gregory XII. The Avignon Pope, who had already been driven from France into Spain, refused, but he had lost all following and could be ignored. The Council decided to appoint no new Pope (who might dispute the Council's powers) until it had finished the rest of its work.

This done, it seemed easier to purge the Church of erroneous doctrine than to reform it in head and members. Destruction is always easier than construction, though even destruction is sometimes not as easy as it seems. Hus was invited to Constance and given a clear promise by the Emperor that he should be allowed to depart unmolested. The Council claimed that it was not bound by the Emperor's promise, and that in any case promises made to heretics were not binding; the Wycliffite doctrines were condemned in advance, and Hus was burnt at the stake.

And now 'reform' remained. Unfortunately, the reformers were hopelessly vague and divided as to what they really wanted, whereas the anti-reformers presented a solid united front. National rivalries complicated the issue. It is a humiliating thought for us that England seized this occasion of all others to invade France: the battle of Agincourt was fought during the Council of Constance.[1] Also, every one wanted to get home. Perhaps this last was the most important point of all.

And so, after long and fruitless debates, nothing was done for reform except a decree that councils should become

[1] And it is a curious commentary on the way history is taught that every Englishman has heard of the battle of Agincourt and—how many per thousand of the Council of Constance?

regular institutions and meet at intervals of eight years. Otherwise, ' reform ' was entrusted to the newly elected Pope, Martin V.

For various reasons no council (except an entirely unimportant Council of Siena, 1423) met till the Council of Basel (1431-1449). Meanwhile the attempt of the Council of Constance to suppress heresy by burning the honest heretic had proved a signal failure. Bohemia sprang to arms and found a leader of genius in Ziska, a kind of Bohemian Cromwell with Cromwell's gift for adapting religious enthusiasm to military purposes. Against his ' Ironsides ' the knighthood of Germany were of no more avail than the cavalry of Rupert against the Ironsides of Cromwell. Five ' crusades ' were defeated before the Council of Basel met.

The Pope (Eugenius IV.) regarded the Council from the first as an enemy, and aimed at its speedy dissolution. The Council, on the other hand, was attended mainly by the more radical spirits, and determined to succeed where Constance had failed. It began by abolishing the division into nations, and admitting all priests to the privilege of the vote. The wretched story is soon told. The Council invited Bohemian delegates to come and discuss the situation with them. The Pope dissolved the Council for negotiating with excommunicated heretics. The Council, undismayed, declared that it could only be dissolved by its own consent, and threatened to depose the Pope. At this point Sigismund stepped in and secured a momentary reconciliation. Then the members began to go home, only the boldest spirits remaining. After eight years bickering the Council declared the Pope deposed and elected a new Pope, Felix V. It looked as if Basel would undo the one solid achievement of Constance and restore schism. However, no one paid much attention to either the Council or its Pope. Finally the Council dissolved in 1449 after being forcibly expelled from Basel by the Emperor. One achievement remains to its credit. In its earlier and better days the Council made a treaty with the

Bohemians, granting one of their leading demands. It had, in the two past centuries, become the practice of the Church to administer to lay communicants the bread only and not the wine, thus granting a fuller communion, as it might seem, to the priests. The Bohemians demanded communion 'in both kinds' for all alike. This was granted by the Council and confirmed by the Emperor Sigismund, who combined with the shadowy glories of 'Roman Empire' the kingship of Bohemia and Hungary. Thus the Hussite heresy became a recognised and tolerated variety within the Church; and no doubt the future unity of Christendom, if it ever can be achieved, will be achieved on these lines. Uniformity is impossible and very likely not desirable. Unity in the service of God, combined with diversity in the method of worshipping him, is the hope of the future. (See page 316.)

Another result of the Council of Basel was that the national rulers, kings and princes, used the Pope's difficulties with the Council to extort concessions from him. A king would say, in effect: I will support you and disown the Council if you will sign a treaty with me granting me control over the Church within my kingdom on this and that point, and will abandon your claim to this and that tax on the Church within my dominion. Both the King of France and the Emperor made treaties of this kind during the sittings of the Council of Basel.[1] Thus the Pope, crippled in his regular income from national sources, was forced to rely more than before on 'trading' with the piety of individuals by the sale of indulgences and the like. It was this 'trading' which afterwards provoked the revolt of Luther.

In 1459 Pope Pius II. issued a bull proclaiming that anyone who appealed from the Pope's decision to any future general council became automatically excommunicated. This may be taken as the deathblow to the Conciliar movement.

[1] Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges 1438 and the Concordat of Vienna 1448. These names and the details of the treaties are important only to the specialist.

Reform was defeated. But the defeat of reform is generally only a prelude to the victory of revolution.

(iii) *The Renaissance: Erasmus* (1466-1536). The period of sixty-eight years from the close of the Council of Basel to the first public protest of Luther (1449-1517) roughly coincides with the climax of the Renaissance. The movement indeed had its seeds far back in the past and lasted, in one form or another, long after the end of this period; but, for the purposes of this book—the effect of the Renaissance on the Church, we may say that it fills the period between the Councils and the Lutheran rebellion.

What was the Renaissance? Sometimes the term is limited to the revival of classical scholarship, but that is far too narrow. Sometimes it is made to include such diverse events as the discovery of America, the discovery that the earth goes round the sun, the painting of Raphael and the plays of Shakespeare. What is the connecting link between these events? what is their common factor?

The Renaissance can best be described as a re-assertion of 'worldliness,' not in the vulgar sense but in the best sense that the word can bear; an appreciation of this world as a place of boundless glorious possibilities, and of Man as capable of realising these possibilities in himself. Such a spirit is not opposed to the Christianity of the Gospels or to Christianity as understood by the best men of our own day; but it was very keenly opposed to much of the religion of the mediaeval Church, to all that side of religion that despised this world as a place of painful probation, a prison through whose bars the soul looked out towards Heaven; which despised the joys of life, or rather dreaded them as snares of the devil.

There still remain in our hymn-books some hymns which express this mediaeval attitude. For example,

> **"Weary of earth and laden with my sin**
> **I look to Heaven and long to enter in."**

Two lines of Browning, on the other hand, express to perfection the Renaissance outlook:

> "How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!"

No true mediaeval mind would have bracketed the soul and the senses like that: he would have regarded the senses as the enemies of the soul. Or hear Shakespeare: "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

We need not seek for the causes of such a movement: they lie in human nature. The marvel is that the movement was so long kept at bay. The revived interest in Greek art and thought was a result rather than a cause: men turned to the Greeks because the best of the Greeks had been what they themselves wished to be.

The Renaissance did not attack the Church: it converted it. The very Popes themselves became the leading patrons of the new arts and the new learning, without realising that in the new world they were so gaily helping to open up there would be no place for themselves. In just the same way the nobles and princely bishops of eighteenth century France revelled in the anti-christian and democratic literature that was preparing their own destruction in the French Revolution.

A glance at a few of these Popes will illustrate the conversion of the leaders of the Church to the new ideas. Nicholas V. (1447-1455) raised money for a 'crusade' to rescue Constantinople from the Turks, but he spent it on beautifying Rome with Renaissance architecture. Shortly before this time a scholar, Valla, had written a pamphlet proving that the supposed 'Donation of Constantine'[1] was a forgery. Nicholas employed Valla as his librarian, and got him to translate the Greek historian Thucydides. Sixtus IV. (1471-1484) built

[1] See p. 159.

the famous Sistine Chapel, and Julius II. (1503-1513), employed Raphael and Michelangelo to decorate it. Between these two Popes came Alexander VI., who had seven acknowledged children, and made the ablest of them, Caesar Borgia, a cardinal at the age of sixteen. This Caesar also created a certain scandal by murdering his own brother. Leo X. (1513-1521) was mainly interested in the building of the new St. Peter's, and it was the sale of indulgences to raise money for this object that provoked the first protest of Luther.

But the artistic career distracted none of these Popes from politics; and papal politics now meant, not the control of Christendom in the cause of Christ, but the defence or enlargement of the papal dominions in Italy. Five little 'powers' were in a constant state of war, Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rome. Milan had called in France: Spain came to conquer Naples: the Emperor came too from Austria for his share. Amidst them all, neither better nor worse than the rest, the Popes picked their way, winning to-day and losing to-morrow, making 'Holy Alliances' and breaking them. The game ended, as it was bound to end, in the victory of one of the great powers, and as it happened this was Spain. In 1527 Rome was sacked by the troops of Charles V., Emperor and King of Spain in one, and from that time onwards till the end of the century the Pope was as a rule, a puppet of Spain, even though he lived in Rome, just as during the Avignon period he had been a puppet of France.

In Germany the Renaissance took a different form. It produced less in the way of masterpieces of art and scholarship; instead, it applied the new idea to the problems of religion. The movement that resulted is known as Humanism, and its greatest leader was Erasmus. Erasmus was by birth not German but Dutch, but his life was one of constant wandering, in England, France, Germany and Italy, and more perhaps than any other man in history he may be called a citizen of Europe. Induced rather against his will to become

a monk and a priest, he extricated himself from professional religious duties as soon as he could and devoted himself to scholarship and literature alone. He was, it has been said, "The first man of letters since the fall of the Roman Empire." His vogue with the educated classes of every country in western Christendom was immense. His Latin itself was a delight to all good judges, being neither the clumsy monotonous Latin of the Middle Ages nor a mere slavish copy of the classical style, like that of most Renaissance scholars: he found a style of his own, suggesting the limitations neither of the monk nor of the schoolmaster.

The central idea of Erasmus was that Christianity should be above all things something practical. It meant love, humility, purity, first and foremost. But the Church had more and more buried these Christian virtues under a mass of doctrines and ceremonies. Christian religion, in fact, had deteriorated in much the same way as Jewish religion under the influence of the Law and the Pharisees had deteriorated from the teaching of the great prophets. Erasmus did not quarrel with this or that doctrine, this or that ceremony, or desire to establish other doctrines or other ceremonies in their place. He simply objected to the immense importance attached to doctrine and ceremony in themselves: it struck him as unintelligent. To Erasmus reasonableness was the supreme virtue, and much that he saw in the monasteries and the churches and the schools of theology seemed to him frankly unreasonable.

He pursued his aim by two methods, critical and constructive. On the critical side he sought by means of satire to display the absurdity of much that passed in his day for 'religious' life. Of his books devoted to this purpose the most famous is *The Praise of Folly*, written in England in 1509.[1] Folly, he says, is the chief source of happiness and rules the world, but more particularly the Church. Folly

[1] The Latin title 'Encomium Moriae' is a pun on the name of his friend Thomas More.

claims credit for spreading belief in the miraculous power of images of saints, belief that by purchasing indulgences you will be excused periods of torment in Purgatory, belief that the daily repetition of the psalter will get you to Heaven, belief that ignorance and dirt are forms of piety. On the constructive side he sought to recall men's minds to primitive Christianity. He published volume after volume of the Christian Fathers, translating the Greek Fathers into Latin, and adding to each an admirable Introduction showing the value of the text for the modern reader. Most important of all, he published the Greek Testament with a new Latin translation of his own, designed to bring out the errors of the Vulgate. This, it has been said, "contributed more to the liberation of the mind from the thraldom of the clergy than all the uproar and rage of Luther's many pamphlets." Similarly, with regard to *The Praise of Folly*, a contemporary wrote, "The jokes of Erasmus did the Pope more harm than the anger of Luther."

Erasmus lived through nearly twenty years of the Lutheran rebellion, and the Protestant party naturally sought to gain the support of the greatest writer of the day. But he distrusted the Protestants and feared they were doing more harm than good. One of the most conspicuous features of Erasmus's mind was a horror of war of every kind, and controversy as the Lutherans conducted it implied revolution, which is the worst form of war. In spite of *The Praise of Folly* Erasmus kept on good terms all his life with the princes of the Church, not from timidity but because he dreaded that in their violent overthrow civilisation itself would perish. He sought to preserve, and trusted that the spirit of the Renaissance would promote that gradual quickening of the intelligence which was to him the only instrument of reform.

It must always remain an open question whether Erasmus was right or wrong. If Erasmus was right, if the true Christian spirit could have been brought back into the world by his methods alone, then the Lutheran reformation was a

disaster, for that reformation became a revolution and split Christendom into sects whose conduct towards one another was the very opposite of Christian; and, though we have ceased to persecute, the divisions and rivalries remain with us to this day. It may be, however, that the disease was too deep to be cured by satire and by scholarship, which could in any case appeal only to the educated minority. Erasmus was aristocratic; Luther was democratic; Luther appealed not to the intelligence but to the human heart:— with results, good and bad, that will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII

REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION (1517-1689)

(i) *Luther* (1483-1546)

MARTIN LUTHER was the son of a poor Saxon miner. His parents were simple pious folk : they taught him the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in their native German, and they were very disappointed when he became a monk. No doubt there were thousands of such people in Germany, already half-way to Protestantism. Luther showed brilliant intellectual promise as a boy, went to the university of Erfurt, studied music and the Latin poets, and intended to become a lawyer. Suddenly, however, at the age of twenty-two, he gave up all this, and entered a monastery of the Augustinian order. Why? because, as he tells us, he " doubted of himself,"—doubted whether by a life in ' the World ' he could fit himself for Heaven. He had, for example, seen a picture representing a great ship sailing heavenwards, and in the ship none but priests and monks, while in the sea around laymen lay drowning or desperately clinging to ropes hung over the side of the ship by the happy passengers ! This picture had deeply impressed a mind already troubled.

So Luther tried, with characteristic honesty and thoroughness, the mediaeval way of salvation. He fasted till he fainted, scourged himself till he bled, and became known as a miracle of piety. But after two years he still remained

unsatisfied and unconsoled. Then, like Augustine, and by means of the same *Epistle to the Romans*, he experienced a sudden 'conversion.' The text "The just shall live by faith" brought him sudden revelation and became in fact the basis of all his future teaching: "by Faith," not "by works of the Law." The true Christian is the man with a Christian heart; compared with this all the ceremonial pieties of the Church are as nothing. This happened in 1507: Luther was now a changed man. Shortly afterwards he moved to a monastery in the university town of Wittenberg, where he soon became a distinguished lecturer.

We see already that Luther had one thing which Erasmus had not. He had religious genius. In its higher forms a gift for religion is as strange and as uncommunicable a thing as a gift for music. Erasmus had learning, wit, and virtue, but he never knew the exquisite agonies of the sense of sin nor the exquisite raptures of the sense of salvation. Luther, like St. Paul and Augustine, understood these things and could speak directly from experience.

Ten years after Luther's conversion, one Tetzel came round to Wittenberg selling indulgences. Luther protested, and nailed his protest on the door of the church (1517). Put briefly, Luther's argument was that an indulgence might excuse you a penance imposed by the Church, but could not excuse you punishment imposed by God after death; still less could it remove the guilt of sin. On the other hand, the Christian who has already repented in his heart and rested his faith on the crucified Saviour was already pardoned by God and did not need an indulgence.

Now there was nothing new in these arguments. Erasmus and others had said the same thing before, but there was something in Luther's personality and his practical way of putting things that fired the spark and set all Germany ablaze. The Pope summoned him to Rome and would probably have burnt him, but here Frederick of Saxony, whose subject Luther was, stepped in, and refused to let him

go. Frederick was perhaps the best and most honest ruler of his day: a pious man and a good German, he would not allow the best lecturer of his university to suffer the fate of Hus. Luther now began to pour forth a flood of vigorous and outspoken pamphlets, not in Latin but in German. It is no exaggeration to say that these pamphlets, and Luther's translation of the Bible, founded German popular literature. In these pamphlets he maintained, like Wycliffe before him, that priests are not specially privileged persons in God's eyes, but that all true believers are priests of God. On the political side he denied the right of the Pope to interfere with the churches of Germany: he denied his right to interpret Scripture contrary to its plain meaning: and called for a General Council to settle the questions he had raised.

In 1520 he was excommunicated. The bull with unconscious humour spoke of him as a fox wasting the Lord's vineyard. Indeed, Luther had spoilt the indulgence market, and probably that was Leo X.'s main cause of quarrel with him. Luther burnt the bull publicly, and half the states of Germany refused to publish it. Then the young Emperor, the great Charles V., ruler of Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and half Italy, took the matter in hand at the Diet of Worms [1] (1521). The princes at the Diet refused to condemn Luther till he had been heard in his own defence; so Luther attended, though many feared for him the fate of Hus. Asked if he would retract he answered, No:—not until he was proved wrong out of Holy Scripture.[2] He was allowed to depart in freedom. The Imperial 'Ban' or condemnation was with difficulty carried through the Diet, but it was, like the bull, waste paper. At this date Wolsey's agent in Germany wrote home, "A hundred thousand Germans are ready to lay down their lives for Luther," and the Emperor's brother, going still further, wrote, "Not one man in a thousand is free from the taint of Lutheranism."

[1] Diet = Parliament. Worms, a city on the Rhine.

[2] "Here I stand," said Luther, "I can no other."

Had Luther died at this moment his would have been one of the most uniformly triumphant careers in history: but he did not, and disaster was ahead of him. In 1525 there was a great rebellion of the German peasantry, similar to the Wat Tyler rebellion in England, but on a far larger scale. The causes were mainly economic, rise of prices and harsh treatment by masters, but the Lutheran movement was a contributory cause. Luther had preached the equality of all men in God's eyes, and if men were equal in God's eyes why should their lots be so unequal in this world? The peasants copied Luther in appealing to Scripture. They demanded the abolition of serfdom, 'because Christ redeemed us and made us free.' This Peasant's War was likely to be disastrous to Luther, and he knew it. So far, men of all classes had been with him, but it would be quite otherwise if it appeared that Lutheranism meant anarchy, robbery, and revolution. He must at all costs separate his cause from that of the peasants, and with a view to doing so he published a pamphlet, *Against the murdering, thieving hordes of peasants*, that will always be a disgrace to his name. In it he urges the princes to 'knock down, strangle, and stab' the rebels, adding, 'in such times a prince can merit heaven better by bloodshed than by prayer.'

The pamphlet may have pleased some of the princes, but it lost Luther the support of the masses; and no wonder. It lost him also the support of the great educated public that had hitherto hesitated between Luther and Erasmus. From this date Lutheranism degenerates. About half the princes of Germany threw off the authority of Rome and 'Lutheranised' their states. Some were genuinely religious men, but most were of the type of our own Henry VIII., shrewd fellows who saw that there was money in the scheme, and wanted to confiscate the wealth of the monasteries in their states.

So Germany divided, Lutheran states mostly in the north, the chief being Saxony and Brandenburg (the central province

of what was afterwards known as the Kingdom of Prussia) and Catholic states in the south. Thirty years (1525-1555) were occupied in trying to restore unity, either by the forcible suppression of Lutheranism, or by the negotiation of a compromise. Charles V. worked hard for unity, first by the one method and then by the other: so did Cardinal Contarini, the best and wisest of the agents of Rome; but it proved impossible. Strangely enough the Pope himself did not really desire it. Charles was virtual ruler of Italy and much too powerful for the Pope's convenience. His weak spot was Germany: if he succeeded in re-uniting Germany, he would be overwhelming. Therefore both the Pope and the Catholic king of France secretly encouraged the Lutheran princes to hold out and defy their Emperor. So strangely were politics and religion intermingled.

Thus reunion failed and permanent religious disunion was recognised by the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555. Each prince was free to choose his own religion, Catholic or Lutheran, and to coerce his subjects: Catholics residing under Lutheran rulers (and *vice versa*) had the choice of conversion or moving on to a state with the other religion. This principle is summed up in the Latin phrase, *cuius regio, eius religio*.

Meanwhile Luther had died nine years before, in 1546. He must always remain one of the greatest figures in religious history; a man of profound convictions, immense force, and unrivalled power of appeal to the minds and hearts of the German people. The forces he set in motion made the great breach in the unity of the Western Church. But he himself was more fitted to destroy than to construct. Glaring abuses and superstitions no doubt received from him their death-blow, and the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith, as re-asserted by Luther, came as a new light to many troubled souls. But no great and lasting revival of Christian brotherhood and Christian effort in daily life can be traced to Luther's influence. Puritanism, the positive and constructive side of the Reformation, looks not to Luther but to Calvin as its apostle.

Indeed the Lutheran movement, after the first enthusiasm was over, lowered rather than raised the moral tone of those whom it influenced. It swept away ancient and often, no doubt, superstitious safeguards of the moral life, and did not replace them by other safeguards. At his best Luther was a brave, generous, and intensely human man, but there was also a strain of violence and brutality in his nature. He was not one of those who, like St. Francis of Assisi or George Fox the Quaker, elevate the movement they lead by setting it an almost Christ-like example. He was by nature a destroyer, and he was too reckless to distinguish with loving carefulness between the good and the bad in what he attacked.

(ii) *The Counter-Reformation, Loyola* (1491-1556), *and the Jesuits.* Ever since the Captivity there had been talk of 'reform.' Wycliffe and Hus had put forward schemes which had been rejected, and their followers were branded as heretics: the Councils had talked of reform but done little or nothing: Erasmus had approached the subject in a new way but had only touched the surface; and now Luther had repeated the performance of Wycliffe and Hus, but on a vastly larger scale. The effect of Luther's movement was that it led Rome at last to set about the task of reform in earnest. This movement is called the Counter-Reformation.

About 1520 a little society was formed in Rome called the Oratory of Divine Love, whose members devoted themselves to the study of the Fathers and particularly of Augustine, and to the practice of a true Christianity. It was a small but distinguished society and included the Italians, Contarini and Caraffa, and the Englishman, Reginald Pole, who afterwards became, under Queen Mary, the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury. Pope Paul III. (1534-1549) was a shrewd and worldly old man, but he had the quickness to see that piety was coming into fashion again and might be useful, and he made Contarini, Caraffa, and Pole Cardinals.

The fundamental question the new movement had to decide was, should it aim at reconciliation with the Lutherans or at destroying them? Contarini stood for reconciliation, Caraffa for destruction. Contarini was allowed to try his policy at the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541: he failed, and henceforth Caraffa (afterwards Paul IV., 1555-1559) was the master-spirit. But Caraffa was a mere persecutor,[1] and the movement would have accomplished little if there had not come to its aid a religious genius as remarkable in his way as Luther, the Spaniard Inigo Lopez de Recalde de Loyola, known to the Roman Church as St. Ignatius.

It was natural that the Lutheran movement should have arisen in Germany, traditionally hostile to Rome ever since the days of the great emperors. In the same way it was natural that the Counter-Reformation should draw its vigour from Spain, for in that country, perhaps on account of the crusading spirit kept alive by the continual wars against the Moors (whose last province was only conquered in 1493), the Church preserved a vigour and a sincerity that had long been lost elsewhere. Further, Spanish Christianity had lately seen a great revival under the pious queen Isabella and her great minister Cardinal Ximenes.

Loyola was by birth a noble and by profession a soldier. At the age of twenty-eight, in the same year as Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms (1521), he was lamed for life by a wound. But he had an unquenchable passion for fame. Military glory being denied him, could he not become a great soldier of Christ, like his fellow-countryman Dominic? He dedicated himself at the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat, hung up his now useless arms before her altar, and spent the night in prayer before her shrine. Then he entered a

[1] Caraffa was mainly responsible for the institution, in 1540, of the Papal Inquisition. The Inquisition may be defined as a court-martial for religious offences, with powers of life and death. It had existed for sometime past in the Spanish dominions and in this as in other respects the Counter-Reformation is an application of Spanish methods to the Church in general.

Dominican Convent and like Luther sought salvation by fasts and scourgings. Like Luther he failed to win the sense of salvation by this means, and like Luther he had the honesty to admit it. Then, as in Luther's case, he suddenly experienced 'conversion,' and was filled with a sense of God's mercy. But here the parallel ends. Luther, after conversion, took up the quiet humdrum life of a university lecturer and never dreamt of fame till he suddenly found it thrust upon him. But in Loyola there was a vein of adventurous eccentricity. He got leave to go to Palestine to convert the Turks, but was shipped back again by the Franciscan colony in Jerusalem, who feared that his headlong methods would get them into trouble. Then, in an access of humility, he went to school and sat among the boys learning Latin. He was afflicted with strange visions, and twice he was imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition for infecting people with his strange ideas.

During these years he began compiling his famous work, the *Spiritual Exercises*. Loyola's religious life was nourished by his gifts of vision: he studied his own experiences and from them compiled a system which would enable others to enjoy similar experiences to his own. Loyola had been a soldier, and there can be no doubt that his extraordinarily precise and detailed instructions are modelled on the lines of military training. The course was to extend over four weeks, during which the pupil was to live in complete solitude. A scheme of meditations is outlined, grouped under four headings: sin and death; the Kingdom of Christ on Earth; the Passion of Our Lord; and the Love of God and the Glory of the Risen Lord. The pupil is required to use his imagination to the utmost, to picture in his mind the flames of hell, to feel their scorching heat, to hear the shrieks, to smell the stench, and so on. The conclusion of each exercise will, if successful, be a sense of immediate converse with God. The detail is extraordinarily minute: precise hours of the day or night are prescribed for each exercise: some should be

undertaken standing, some kneeling, some lying flat on the floor.

We cannot but notice that here we have passed much further from the Renaissance spirit than Luther had done. Luther appealed to the Bible: Loyola appeals to an 'inner light,' which reason is powerless to criticise.

In 1540 Loyola, like Francis of Assisi three hundred and thirty years before, presented himself to the Pope with nine disciples. They vowed unconditional obedience to papal orders, and were accepted as the original members of the Society of Jesus.

The Jesuits were unlike any order of monks or friars that had existed hitherto. They had no special dress, no special homes, no special religious duties: fasting was discouraged, as well as all other forms of 'indiscreet devotion.' The 'spiritual exercises' were an essential part of the training of the Jesuit, but once fully trained he was discouraged from using them. Everything was to be sacrificed for the sake of efficiency in service. For the sake of efficiency too, the keynote of the order was implicit obedience. Its head, the General, always resided in Rome, 'the Black Pope,' as he was called, the servant of the real Pope, and often more formidable than his master.

The greatest work of the Jesuits was done in education. They quickly became far the best schoolmasters in Europe. Men sent their sons to Jesuit schools because they were the best schools, and their sons came home enthusiasts for the Counter-Reformation. They invented 'marks,' and thus introduced the stimulus of competition: they improved the teaching of mathematics and science: above all, they trained their teachers in the art of teaching before they allowed them to teach. Bacon had no reason to love the Jesuits, but he writes: "As for pedagogy the shortest rule would be, 'Consult the Jesuits': for nothing better has been put in practice." In Germany their university of Ingolstadt quickly rivalled the fame of Luther's Wittenberg: and in

Flanders their university of Douai trained Englishmen to go forth and conquer the great island stronghold of Protestantism. The educational system of the Jesuits was in fact a perfect instrument for the purpose for which it was intended. It carried intellectual efficiency as far as it is possible to carry it without tempting the pupil to think for himself. In this respect it closely resembled the marvellous educational system erected by the Prussian state in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Why have the Jesuits got such a bad reputation? Mainly for two reasons. It is said that they teach the dangerous doctrine that 'the end justifies the means,' that is to say, you may commit a sin if the result will be for God's glory. They deny that they have so taught, but there is no doubt that in the time of the religious wars they definitely encouraged the assassination of Protestant sovereigns. Jesuits wove several assassination plots against Elizabeth and were at the back of the Gunpowder Plot. Secondly, they made, it is held, an unscrupulous use of the practice of Confession. Confession confers immense power on the confessor, and the Jesuits saw that to be popular confessors was second only in importance to being popular schoolmasters. So they elaborated a classification of sins whereby the penitent could be persuaded that his sin was not as bad as it seemed; in fact their confessors became professional inventors of excuses. This confessional art is known as Casuistry: as originally used the word implied no suggestion of dishonesty. It was the Jesuits who discredited it.[1]

By the time of his death in 1556 Loyola had seen his order spread all over Catholic Europe and engaging in missionary work in the East Indies and South America.

Five years after the foundation of the Jesuit order, Paul III. summoned a General Council at Trent (1545) on the frontiers of Italy and Austria. Luther just lived to see it

[1] A famous French Jesuit was known as the man 'qui tollit peccata mundi per definitionem.'

meet, but it was a very different kind of Council from that which he had demanded. Caraffa and the leading Jesuits were the dominant spirits, and the whole energies of the Council were directed to defining the doctrines of the Church in such a way as to present an ultimatum to the Lutherans, which would be followed by war to the death. The doctrine of Justification by Faith was condemned: the Church, speaking through the Pope, was asserted to be an authority equal to the Bible, and the sole interpreter of the Bible's meaning: and the Hussite claim that the laity should receive the cup at Communion was rejected. The Council, after two long prorogations owing to the troubled state of Europe, was dissolved in 1563.

And now to crown all came at last the election of the ideal Counter-Reformation Pope, the man in whose personality the whole movement seemed to be summed up, the saintly persecutor, Pius V. (1566-1572), who excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, blessed Alva's bloody work in the Netherlands and might, very possibly, if he had lived three months longer, have laughed for joy, as did Philip II. of Spain, at the news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Yet according to his lights he was a saintly man, pure-minded, unselfish, generous, and kindly. When people beheld him in processions, barefoot and with uncovered head, his face beaming with unaffected piety, they were excited to enthusiastic reverence: it was said that Protestants had been converted by the mere sight of him.

The great achievement of this Pope was the compilation of a Catechism, based on the decrees of the Council of Trent and summing up Catholic doctrine in the most precise terms.[1] Another offspring of the Council of Trent was the famous "Index," the list, ever increasing in length, of books which the Catholic laity were forbidden to read. Fifty years later

[1] It is a much longer and more elaborate document than the catechism of the English Prayer Book, which is intended only for educational purposes.

Paolo Sarpi, himself a Catholic, was to declare that the Index was the finest instrument ever devised for making men stupid. The armoury of the Counter-Reformation was now complete.

(iii) *Calvin* (1509-1564) *and Calvinism.* While the Roman Church was thus arming itself for the struggle and drawing fresh energy from Spain, Protestantism was doing much the same thing in a different way and drawing fresh strength from Geneva. Luther's aim had been not rebellion but reform: when driven into rebellion the Lutheran movement, though clear as to its beliefs, was very vague in organisation. Luther had to fall back on the secular princes to organise his churches for him, and that fact gave to the movement, when the first few glorious years were over, a touch of worldliness and compromise from which it never recovered. It was the special work of Calvin to provide a pattern of Protestant organisation.

John Calvin was the son of a lawyer of Picardy in northern France. He received a good education and showed extraordinary intellectual gifts. His commentary on the Stoic Seneca, written at the age of twenty-three, is a work of prodigious learning. Probably he was already more or less a Protestant, but on the subject of his inner life he always maintained an aristocratic reserve, and consequently he is much less intimately known to us than Luther and Loyola. Four years later (1536) at the age of twenty-seven he published his great book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Francis I. of France was at that date assisting the Lutherans of Germany in order to injure his rival Charles V., and at the same time persecuting the Protestants of France. He excused himself by pretending that the French Protestants held abominable doctrines quite different from their German brethren. Calvin's book is a defence of the French Protestants, but it was more than this, for it rapidly came to be recognised as the ablest and completest statement of the

Protestant position that had yet appeared. Luther's works were pamphlets hastily composed on the spur of the moment, but Calvin's was an elaborate treatise. His method was to take the Apostles' Creed clause by clause and show that the doctrines and practices of the Protestants are in better accord with the Creed than those of the Catholics.

During the same year he happened to spend a night in Geneva while on a journey, and was persuaded, much against his inclination, by Farel, the leader of the Protestants there, to stay awhile and help them. The stay lasted, except for a brief exile, for the whole of the rest of his life, twenty-eight years.

Geneva was, at that date, neither in Switzerland nor France. It was a city of the Empire and had been ruled by its bishop : the bishopric was a family property of the Dukes of Savoy (ancestors of the present king of Italy), and they appointed members of their own family as bishops, regardless of their suitability from the religious point of view. So there was an old quarrel between the townsfolk, represented by the Town Council, and the bishop. Now Protestantism had come to complicate the issue. Geneva had become Protestant and the bishop had been expelled.

Calvin was, like all the Reformers and Humanists, a close student of early Christianity, and he saw in Geneva materials for the creation of just such a religious unit as the primitive Churches had been. The Church had grown in its first centuries as a federation of little Christian republics,—Churches such as those to which St. Paul had written his Epistles. The new beginning must be made on the old lines. The existing municipal government of the town, with its Little Council (or Cabinet), its Council of Two Hundred (or Parliament), and its General Council of all the citizens,[1]

[1] The population of Geneva was about 13,000, about half the size of Canterbury to-day. Towards the end of Calvin's life this population was increased by the presence of about 6000 religious refugees from Catholic countries, especially England under Mary.

summoned to decide issues of special importance, provided a framework. Calvin added a 'Consistory' consisting of twelve pastors and twelve representatives of the Councils. In fact, the self-governing city State and the self-governing city Church were combined in one, and over all was the ubiquitous energy of Calvin, directing and controlling not only religion but education, sanitation (a matter in which Geneva became a model city by the standards of those times), and trade. His position reminds us of the half-legendary legislators of ancient Greece, a Lycurgus or a Solon.

Calvinism was thus democratic: but it left small room for liberty. Public worship was compulsory: gay clothes and dancing were punishable offences: unchastity was at times punished with death. Calvin brought back the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the place it had occupied in the early Church, a solemn privilege from which moral offenders were excluded by excommunication.

Calvin held firmly the Lutheran doctrine of Justification by Faith: he held that, apart from Christ, man inherits the curse of Adam, and that it is only through faith in Christ that the gift of redemption through Christ can be secured. But he also held the terrible doctrine of Predestination,—that, since God is the supreme controller of all things, some must be destined to everlasting happiness and others to everlasting damnation. Such a belief might well, it would seem, have crushed the spirit of human effort; for if one's destiny is predetermined what could poor human endeavour avail? Yet all history shows that the very opposite result followed. We may or we may not like the stern and somewhat harsh Calvinist (or Puritan) type of religion, but its worst enemies cannot deny that it has been productive of splendid energy. The peoples that adopted Calvinism, the Scots and the Dutch, are proverbial for their sturdy self-reliance; the French Huguenots were, at the time of their expulsion, the most industrious citizens of France: the English Puritans defied

the king, established the power of Parliament, and laid the solid foundations of the United States of America. How can we account for this?

Two reasons may be suggested. First, Calvinism made a direct appeal to the individual soul. The Church could punish, but it could not save. There was no priest to sell indulgences or Jesuit confessor to explain the sin away. Calvinists, one may almost say, forgot that they were predestined, or rather they determined to prove by their manner of life that they were predestined to salvation. Secondly, the democratic organisation gave the layman a sense of religious self-respect; he felt himself an active and responsible citizen of Christ's kingdom on earth. He could not regard his Church as a convenience provided for him by a special class of professional priests. In fact, if we value democracy we must thank the Calvinists for having first made it a living force in the modern world.

Before Calvin's death Calvinism had spread far beyond Geneva. Henry II. of France (1547-1559) began a vigorous persecution of French Lutherans, and he found that if you persecute a Lutheran you make a Calvinist. The French Calvinists or Huguenots organised themselves in city churches on Genevan lines. In 1560 there were forty-nine of these, and Calvin supplied them with a hundred and twenty pastors trained in Geneva. For Calvin, like Loyola, realised the importance of education, and the Calvinist university of Geneva was one of the greatest of his institutions.

Then came the sensational religious revolution of Scotland. After the death of King James V. in 1542 Scotland was ruled by his widow the French Mary of Guise on behalf of her infant daughter Mary Queen of Scots. Scottish Protestants rebelled, with the support of the English government which was seeking to conquer the country. Among the rebels was a fierce peasant priest, John Knox. He was made prisoner in 1547, and spent nineteen months in the French galleys; thence he passed to England, where he refused a

bishopric under the Protestant régime of Edward VI., and, on the accession of the Catholic Mary, went to Geneva, now the recognised headquarters of Protestantism. In 1558 the Scottish Protestant nobility again rose in rebellion and invited Knox to come to their assistance. In two years, with the assistance of the English fleet, the revolution was successfully accomplished. Scotland was not, like France, a land of populous cities, and the Calvinist or Presbyterian 'Kirk' of Scotland was organised under a General Assembly which quite eclipsed the old Scottish Parliament as the expression of the national will. Under the General Assembly the unit of government is the Presbytery, consisting of a group of parishes controlled by the presbyters or lay elders, who elected the ministers of each parish. The parish itself was controlled by the Kirk Session, consisting of the minister and the lay elders.

This ecclesiastical democracy fashioned anew the character of Scotland, and transformed an unstable and a barbarous people into one of the most vigorous, resolute, and highly educated nations of Europe. It was a system that ill agreed with monarchy, and from the days of Knox to the expulsion of the Stuarts, from England and Scotland alike, in 1689, the history of Scotland is the history of the bitter struggles between Kirk and King.[1]

(iv) *Religious Wars and Toleration* (1560-1689). It is no part of the plan of this book to follow through the history of the terrible wars and persecutions which followed the break-up of the mediaeval Church, but a few brief notes on their character and results are unavoidable.

The wars fall into two great groups with an interval of about twenty years between them. In the first group of wars (1560-1600) the Calvinist Dutch won their independence from the Catholic Philip II. of Spain, and the Huguenots of France secured their right to toleration except within five

[1] See chapter on Scottish Church in Part IV.

miles of Paris, and were given the control of eight cities as a guarantee of their rights (Edict of Nantes, 1598). The second group (1618-1648) is known as the Thirty Years' War. Calvinism had spread to Germany and the Calvinist Elector Palatine was offered the crown of Bohemia as the result of a Calvinist revolution on the scene of Hus's rebellion two centuries before. Thereupon the Emperor Ferdinand II., a pupil of the Jesuit university, made a determined effort to stamp out Calvinism and possibly Lutheranism also, and make himself a real king of Germany, ruling a united country after the manner of the kings of England or France. The Protestants were supported by the Lutheran king of Sweden, who wished at the same time to extend his empire to the south side of the Baltic, and by the Catholic government of France, which has always dreaded the establishment of a strong and united Germany. The result was that, though the Emperor conquered Bohemia and suppressed its Calvinists he failed in his larger policy, and the old principle was reestablished by which each German prince chose the religion of his state. When the Thirty Years' War ended, another religious war was still in progress in England between the episcopal Church of England and the English and Scottish Calvinists. Finally, between 1680 and 1690, we see Louis XIV. expelling the Huguenots from France and James II. seeking to restore Roman Catholicism in England.

All these wars were only in part religious. Religion was often a mere excuse to cover political ambitions. One may, perhaps, in each one of the wars distinguish three types of attitude. There were (i) those who fought for one or other creed from sheer conviction and in a true crusading spirit; (ii) those who, with varying degrees of hypocrisy, supported one or other creed because they thought they could gain something thereby. For example, many French nobles became Huguenots simply because they desired to weaken the crown and maintain their independence: (iii) those who

desired peace and toleration, either because they had the truly Christian spirit and believed that the service of Christ was to be found in love and not in persecution, or because they were indifferent to religion and hated to see their country torn in pieces by rival armies of fanatics both of which they equally despised.

To temperaments of this last type the spirit that made these religious wars possible must have been well nigh incomprehensible. And we too find this passion for religious uniformity hard to understand. It was the legacy of the Middle Ages. Mediaeval Christendom conceived itself as the Kingdom of God planted in the midst of a surrounding Heathendom. Citizenship of that Kingdom meant eternal blessedness, and the test of citizenship was acceptance of orthodox belief. The Reformers inherited this conception of a necessary and universal orthodoxy. There could be only one true system of Christian doctrine and Church government, and those who possessed it, as each party believed themselves to do, felt bound to suppress heterodoxies of any description. When it had become plain that unity of Christendom was no longer possible, the secular governments picked up the old mediaeval notion of orthodoxy and applied it to their own states. To a Protestant king, the eternal welfare of a Catholic subject might or might not be a matter of importance, but in either case he could not bring himself to believe that one who differed from himself in religion could be loyal to his government even in purely secular matters. Yet the secular governments failed to secure religious unity as completely as the Papal government had failed to secure the unity of Christendom.

Thus toleration crept in first as a necessary evil, then as a matter of course. Persecuting laws ceased to be enforced long before they were actually repealed. The ' heretic ' was deprived of many of his privileges as a citizen, but he was allowed to exist, and, more or less openly as the case might be, to organise his religious worship as he pleased. It was only

long afterwards that full citizenship of his country was accorded him. Roman Catholics could not sit in the English Parliament till 1830, nor Jews till 1858, nor openly professing Atheists till 1886.

Note.—The Missionary work of the mediaeval Church and the Jesuits in heathen countries will be briefly described in the chapter on Missions in Part IV.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Part III

The history of the Church from Constantine to the Reformation is not only dealt with in Church Histories but is also, of course, a conspicuous topic in general works.

1. *W. E. H. Lecky, History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (*Longmans*), as already recommended under Part II.

2. *H. W. C. Davis, Mediaeval Europe* (*Home University Library*), a compact and careful description.

3. *A. L. Smith, Church and State in the Middle Ages* (*Oxford University Press*), six lectures on the period of Innocent IV., designed to show both the greatness of the Papacy and its irremediable fall in that period.

4. *E. Barker, Crusades* (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911). This long article is much the best general account in English. The biographical articles on important men are nearly always good also.

5. *Father Cuthbert, St. Francis of Assisi* (*Longmans*). A pleasant popular life; a more scholarly and critical biography is that by P. Sabatier, which has been translated into English.

6. *R. W. Church, Dante* (*Macmillan*), the best general study.

7. *M. Creighton, History of the Papacy* (*Longmans*), covers in detail the period from the Schism to the Sack of Rome in 1527. The excellent table of contents makes it easy to use.

8. *T. M. Lindsay, History of the Reformation* (*T. & T. Clark*), the work of a Protestant, but on the whole very fair in its treatment of both sides: contains much interesting biographical detail of both Luther and Loyola.

9. *J. A. Froude, Times of Erasmus and Luther* (*Short Studies in Great Subjects, Vol. I., Longmans*), three brilliantly readable lectures, Protestant in sympathy.

PART IV

GREAT BRITAIN SINCE THE REFORMATION

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE first three parts of this book have traced the history of Christianity from its far-distant source among the ancient Israelites down to the end of the Reformation period. Already, however, it has been necessary to drop out of sight one part of the subject, the Eastern Church, and to limit ourselves, for the Middle Ages, to Western Europe. Up to the end of the Reformation period, Western Europe—the countries that acknowledged or had acknowledged the authority of the Pope—could be treated as a single unit. In recent centuries there has, however, been no such unity. It seems best, therefore, to limit Part IV. to the study of the non-Roman Churches in England and Scotland during the last three and a half centuries. The omission of any special treatment of the Roman Catholics is, of course, open to criticism; but it appeared well-nigh impossible to do justice to the religious life of the small body of English Romanists without opening up the vast subject of the history of the Roman Church as a whole since the Council of Trent, and this clearly lay outside the scope of the volume.

A general chapter on Missions is also included.

CHAPTER XVIII

ANGLICAN AND PURITAN

(i) *The Elizabethan Settlement* (1559-1640)

POLITICAL, economic, and religious motives curiously combined in the Reformation. In the Lutheran revolution in Germany we have seen a movement, in origin entirely religious, degenerate into something mainly political and economic, whose chief defenders were princes intent on getting control of the religious organisation, and pillaging the monasteries within their estates. In England the order is almost exactly reversed. The political and economic part of the Reformation, the substitution of King for Pope as Head of the Church, and the dissolution of the monasteries and other mediaeval religious organisations, was carried through by Henry VIII. and his parliament at a time when the new religious enthusiasm had hardly touched England. Edward VI.'s reign saw the beginnings of Protestant doctrine in the Prayer Book of 1552, but the main feature of the reign was the continuance of the shameless pillage of the Church by wealthy nobles who disgraced the name of Protestant. The bulk of Englishmen were conservative and Catholic in sympathy, and their conversion to Protestantism was only begun when they saw the Catholic Queen Mary burning the Protestant bishops and making over her country to the rule of her hated Spanish husband. In fact, national feeling at that date was as strong as religious feeling was weak. The great bulk accepted on patriotic

grounds whatever form of Church the government ordained. It is notable that among the two hundred and fifty martyrs there was not a single layman of wealth or high position.

The aim of Elizabeth and her counsellors was to establish not so much religious truth as religious peace. Toleration was not accepted in theory. The Church must be all-inclusive, but if it was to be all-inclusive it must be made as acceptable and as comprehensive as possible. It was, in fact, a compromise. Henry VIII.'s settlement was restored with its more offensive features omitted, as, for example, the petition in the Litany praying that we may be delivered " from the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities." The English Prayer Book was restored, but the central passages of the Communion Service were so worded as to be acceptable both to Protestants who denied the ' real presence ' of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament and to Catholics who accepted it. Thus for eleven years the Pope refrained from excommunicating Elizabeth, and it was only after the excommunication (1570), which made neutrality as regards Rome impossible, that the Catechism and the Thirty-Nine Articles were added to the Prayer Book.

Most men accepted the settlement because it was at once moderate and national, still more, perhaps, because it *was* a settlement and Queen and Parliament had made it. As for those who did not accept it in their hearts, Elizabeth knew well that persecution would only advertise them. It was her boast that her government " made no windows into men's souls," and, indeed, for nearly twenty years after Elizabeth's accession there was no persecution. Her first Archbishop, Matthew Parker, summed up in himself the spirit of the Church over which he presided. Parker, it is said, " reverenced monarchy, loved decency and order, and nothing shocked him so much as violent enthusiasm."

Such a settlement was at the moment the best thing possible. We have to thank Elizabeth and Parker and their supporters that England was spared the horrible religious

wars that were just breaking out in Holland and France. But in itself the settlement was hardly religious at all: it was a mere empty house in which the spirit of religion might or might not make its temple. Would it prove an adequate temple? If not, the spirit of religion, which was now reviving in England, would assuredly pull it down and build afresh.

Two types of religion, Catholic and Protestant, were striving for mastery in Europe across the Channel. What would be the attitude of the genuinely religious Catholic and the genuinely religious Protestant to the Elizabethan settlement? The Catholics in England long hesitated, but as the reign advanced and the Queen was excommunicated (1570) and the first Jesuits landed in England (1580), they split into two parties. The smaller party renounced the Elizabethan settlement and became 'Papists,' subject to a variety of persecuting 'Recusancy' Laws, which were only occasionally enforced with vigour: the larger party accepted the settlement, and became Anglican as distinct from Roman. How far they can be said to have remained 'Catholic' is a much disputed point and depends upon the definition of terms. In relation to the Puritans they were 'Catholic': in relation to Rome they were 'Protestant.' This party, though not large in numbers, was in possession of power in the Church during most of the period from the Elizabethan settlement to the Puritan Revolution.

The Protestants in England, who soon became known as the Puritans,[1] did not hesitate, like the Catholics, to accept the settlement, but from the first they sought in one way or another to alter its character. The Puritans quickly came to include the greater part of the genuinely religious people in the country, but down to 1640 they were almost entirely in opposition. They will be described more fully in the next section.

We generally think of the Reformation as bringing with

[1] The term Puritan first appears in 1564, in a contemptuous sense.

it an immediate increase of religious energy, but the political and economic Reformation hitherto effected in England had had the opposite result. In fact, the moral standard of the parish clergy, not very high before the Reformation, broke down completely. The Church service was read on Sunday as a State test, because those who failed to attend were supposed to be fined. Sermons were rare, and were actually discouraged because they promoted religious controversy. As inoffensive substitutes for the sermon composed by the preacher, two books of official sermons or 'homilies' had been issued, the first at the end of Henry VIII.'s reign and the second in 1563, containing together thirty-three homilies. The country people often disliked the new Prayer Book, because they felt the old Latin prayers possessed a magical value. As late as 1608 a clergyman complained that his congregation refused to pray in their own language, and muttered instead such confused recollections of the Latin Creed as "Creezum zuum patrum onitentem ejus amicum, Dominum nostrum qui sum sops, Virgini Mariae, crixus fixus, Ponchi Pilati audubiticus, morti by Sunday, father a furnes, scerest ut judicarum, finis a mortibus."

Such was the state of provincial religious life when, about 1573, some of the more earnest clergy, who were also Puritan in outlook, began organising meetings amongst themselves for the purpose of discussing religious subjects and training one another by mutual helpfulness in the art of preaching; for it was admitted even by their opponents that the few churches at which sermons were preached drew far better congregations than the others. These meetings, called 'Prophesyings,' began at Northampton and rapidly spread over the country. The Queen was at once alarmed and issued a letter to the bishops, commanding them to suppress the prophesyings. Archbishop Parker was now dead and his successor, Archbishop Grindal, boldly protested and refused to send out any injunction for the suppression of these meetings. He realised that in its dread of religious

controversy the government was in danger of trying to suppress religion itself. The Queen angrily suspended him from his duties (1577), and his death six years later enabled her to appoint as his successor Archbishop Whitgift, a vigorous disciplinarian of the type of the more famous Laud. Whitgift established the High Commission Court, which was empowered to enquire into all offences against the Acts of Parliament defining the Church ; to punish persons absenting themselves from Church, and to deprive all beneficed clergy who held opinions contrary to the Articles. The Court was empowered to dispense with the time-honoured institution of the jury, by which persons prosecuted in ordinary courts are protected against tyranny. Lord Burghley told Whitgift that the procedure of the Court " savoured too much of the Romish Inquisition," and, indeed, it differed from the Inquisition hardly at all, except that it was unable to make use of the death penalty.

None the less, in spite of this repressive policy, the Church began to gather around itself a spirit of religious devotion. It is perhaps not fanciful to connect this in part with the thanksgiving for the great victory over the Armada to which the Church gave expression and in which all Englishmen joined. Soon after Anglicanism received powerful support in the sphere of literature when Richard Hooker published, in 1594, the first four Books of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, one of the earliest classics of modern English prose literature.

The story of the origin of Hooker's work is interesting as illustrating the curious conditions that prevailed in the Church at that time. In 1585 Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple. His predecessor had not been in the habit of preaching, and a Puritan named Travers had been appointed to ' lecture ' in the Temple church on Sunday evenings. Hooker now preached in the mornings, and Travers attempted the refutation of his doctrines in the evenings. Soon afterwards Travers was deprived of his lectureship by Whitgift, and issued a pamphlet in protest.

Hooker replied with another pamphlet, but, feeling the subject required more detailed treatment, got himself transferred to a country living so that he might devote himself wholly to a great literary undertaking. Hooker denies the Puritan contention that all problems of ecclesiastical government can be solved by reference to the Bible, and that every institution must be wrong which is not literally backed by a text. God's Law is operative not only in the Bible but in man's reason and conscience. The State is a necessary and therefore a divine institution, and episcopacy and royal supremacy are justified because through them the unity of Church and State, as different aspects of one Divine Commonwealth, are best maintained.

Throughout the reigns of James I. and Charles I. Anglicanism was gaining in religious depth. It produced its first notable 'saint' in Bishop Andrewes (died 1626), whom all from the king downwards united in revering, and in 1631 was published George Herbert's little volume of religious poems, *The Temple*, which exercised the same sort of influence in its day as Keble's *Christian Year* two hundred years later. None the less, though Anglicanism was gaining, Puritanism was gaining faster, and the last great Anglican name before the Puritan Revolution is that of the man who strained the bands of Elizabethan uniformity till they broke in his hands, Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633.

It is very easy to state the case against Laud. He was a true disciple of Queen Elizabeth born a generation too late. The deep problems of theology simply did not interest him, and he sought to suppress theological discussion by persecuting the Puritan theologians with a vigour unknown before. The deep ecstasies of religious emotion, whether Puritan or Catholic, were quite outside his ken. Like Parker he stood for decency and order, and dreaded 'enthusiasm.' His main pre-occupation was with ritual. He was not, as his enemies thought, a Papist in disguise. In his last speech on the

scaffold, when he had nothing more to hope or fear, he spoke of himself as a Protestant. But he saw a united Counter-Reformation on the Continent still gaining ground as it seemed against the divided Protestant sects, and above all things he longed for unity, and as the first step towards unity, uniformity. Hence his regulations, which seem to some so tedious, about the wearing of vestments and the position of the altar. Ritual, in fact, was discipline, and should be enforced as such. The greatest and the fairest modern historian of that period, S. R. Gardiner, writes, "To him the Church was not so much the temple of a living Spirit, as the palace of an invisible King."

But to understand Laud's point of view we must hear him in his own defence. He writes: "No one thing hath made conscientious men more wavering in their own minds or more apt and easy to be drawn aside from the sincerity of the religion professed by the Church of England than the want of uniform and decent order in too many churches of the Kingdom. It is true the inward worship of the heart is the great service of God, and no service is acceptable without it; but the external worship of God in His Church is the great witness to the world that our heart stands right in that service of God. And a great weakness it is not to see the strength which ceremonies—things weak enough in themselves, God knows—add even to religion itself."

These are not the words of a man to be despised, as Laud too often is by the champions of the Puritan and Parliamentary cause. The policy of uniformity and repression for which Laud and Charles laid down their lives was a wrong one. But part of what they stood for was sound and has survived all the onslaughts of their enemies.

(ii) *The Puritans.* Puritanism is not the name of a sect. The name Puritan was given to all those sturdy Protestants who, from the time of the Elizabethan settlement onwards, wished to 'purify' the Church from such 'Romish' errors

as in their opinion still adhered to it. Some of the first Puritans were Protestants who, like John Knox, had fled from England to Geneva and other places on the Continent where the influence of Calvinism was already active, during the Marian persecution.

Three main types of Puritan policy can be distinguished. First, there were those—probably the large majority right down to the time of the Civil War—who were content to accept the main lines of the Elizabethan settlement, but disliked the way it worked : they objected, not to episcopacy as such, but to the type of man promoted, and the policy of Whitgift, Laud, and the High Commission Court. Secondly, there were those who condemned episcopacy, partly because it savoured of Rome rather than Geneva, but still more because the royal appointment and royal control of bishops was contrary to the principles of self-government which Calvin had made a feature of Protestantism in France and Scotland ; these were Presbyterians, and aimed at a radical reorganisation of the government of the Church. Thirdly, there were those who, either because they thought reform of the State Church impossible, or because they disbelieved in the very principle of central control, demanded liberty for each congregation to worship according to its own desires : these were known as Sectaries or Independents, and were what we should to-day call Dissenters or Nonconformists.

What then were the common characteristics of these different types of Puritan ? The vitality of Puritanism in all its branches was drawn from the Bible. The translation of the Bible had been begun by Wycliffe, but before the days of printing and the spread of education that came with the Renaissance, a wide-spread ' Bible religion ' as distinct from a ' Church religion ' was impossible. The first complete and officially authorised translation was published by the anti-Roman government of Henry VIII. A succession of versions followed, the last being that authorised by James I.'s government in 1611 and still in general use. None of these

governments realised that they were authorising the distribution of a kind of spiritual dynamite that would blow sky-high their carefully built edifice of uniformity. Alone with his Bible by his own fireside, the Puritan deciphered for himself the will of God without priestly intermediary, and established in his own heart a standard by which he criticised his Church and found it falling short in many particulars. "A deep and splendid effect was wrought by the monopoly of this book as the sole reading of common households in an age when men's minds were instinct with natural poetry and open to receive the light of imagination. A new religion arose . . . of which the pervading spirit was the direct relations of man with God, exemplified in human life. And while the imagination was kindled, the intellect was freed by this private study of the Bible. For its private study involved its private interpretation. Each reader, even if a Churchman, became in some sort a Church to himself. Hence the hundred sects and thousand doctrines that astonished foreigners, and opened England's strange path to intellectual liberty. The Bible cultivated here, more than in any other land, the growth of individual thought and practice." [1]

Thus the characteristic of Puritanism was individualism. For the Catholic practice of confession to the priest it substituted the duty of rigid self-examination, which, while free from the dangers of confessionalism, has dangers of its own: for while exalting the 'tribunal of conscience' it cannot always secure that that tribunal judges by the right standards. To Puritanism also we owe the peculiarly British practice of family prayers.

But Puritanism was not without its permanent achievements in the sphere of social life. It established what is known abroad as the "English Sunday." The Puritans prohibited both work and play on the 'Day of Rest.' We are apt to suppose that they only prohibited play, and as a result we are not sufficiently grateful to them. But they did

[1] Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 61.

a great deal in suppressing work as well, as is shown by the fact that the anti-Puritan government of Elizabeth deliberately encouraged work, buying and selling, on Sundays as well as week-days. The modern 'week-ender' who laughs at 'Sabbatarianism' has the Sabbatarian to thank for his week-end freedom.

Puritan opposition goes back to the very beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The first important controversy was over surplices. The surplice was to the Puritan an 'Aaronic' garb, and a sign of superstition. According to the Protestant or Puritan view the clergy were not a divinely privileged order, but simply a 'profession'—the noblest of professions, no doubt—instituted by man for human convenience, like doctors and lawyers; not 'priests' but 'ministers.' Open defiance in the matter of the surplice the government could not allow. Two heads of Oxford colleges were called upon to show cause why they did not wear surplices. Their reply, which quoted Scripture as refuting the ordinances of the English Church, touched Elizabeth to the quick. The rule was enforced, and thirty-seven clergy in London alone refused to comply and resigned their livings. From this date (1566) secret conventicles for ultra-Protestant worship begin. But it was not the way of the government to proceed to extremities; and uniformity was not strictly enforced until the time of Archbishop Laud.

The House of Commons was from the first the stronghold of Puritan sentiment. Strickland and Peter Wentworth[1] in Elizabeth's reign played the same parts as Eliot and Pym under her successors. In 1571 Strickland proposed a reform of the Prayer Book, and Wentworth later died in prison for his Parliamentary attacks on the bishops, as true a martyr as Eliot. When the Puritans failed to secure reform of the Prayer Book they began to attack the book itself, and this was probably the least popular as well as the most unwise part of their policy.

[1] A distant relative of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.

The 1570's were the critical period. During these years the prophesyings were suppressed and the semi-Puritan Archbishop Grindal suspended (see above p. 235); the burning, on rare occasions, of Protestant heretics was revived; and the first important Nonconformist sect, the Brownists, was founded by Robert Browne. Before the end of Elizabeth's reign Whitgift had already driven to Holland some of the stern unbending Puritans who afterwards (1621) crossed to America in the *Mayflower* and founded the New England colonies. Indeed, the part played by persecution of Puritans in founding the American colonies is greater than one likes to think. The emigrant for religion's sake was less likely to return home than the emigrant for adventure or money-making. Laud was, in his unconscious way, as great an empire-builder as Raleigh.

When James I. came to the throne the Puritans hoped for more generous treatment, and several hundred Puritan clergy presented to the King the 'Millenary Petition,'[1] asking that the use of the surplice should be optional, and that the clergy should not be required to declare their belief in the absolute truth of all contained in the Prayer Book, provided they signed the Articles and used the services. James summoned a conference at Hampton Court to consider the Petition, but at the mention of the word 'synod' he broke in on the discussion with violent denunciations of the Presbyterian system (for which, incidentally, the Petition had not asked), and refused the Puritan demands. "I will make them conform themselves," he said, "or I will harry them out of the land."

Thus was created the situation which led to the Puritan Revolution. That story need not be told here as it is one of the most familiar episodes in English history. A few points, however, may be noticed.

In the history of that Revolution we find questions of

[1] So called because it claimed to express the views of a thousand clergymen.

religion and questions of taxation curiously, almost comically, intermingled;—Tonnage, Poundage, and Predestination stand side by side in the famous 'Three Resolutions' of March, 1629. The fact is that two Revolutions, logically distinct, were being carried through side by side by men who believed equally in Puritanism and Parliamentary government. But of the two motives religion was the deeper. Cromwell himself, who won the war, states that his party would never have taken up arms but for the cause of Puritanism. Thus, though in the long run the Parliamentary cause was won and the Puritan cause partly, though not wholly, lost, it is to Puritanism that we owe the survival of Parliamentary institutions.

When once the Revolution was launched by the Long Parliament, the three-fold division of Puritan policy described at the beginning of this section proved the ruin of the party. The great bulk of that unanimously Puritan Parliament of 1641 would have wished to retain both Episcopacy and the Prayer Book, if the king would have agreed to grant the demands of the Millenary Petition. Since he would not, a bare majority unwillingly adopted the Presbyterian scheme and military alliance with the Scottish Presbyterians. But a Presbyterian tyranny was likely, in the opinion of many Puritans, to be worse than the tyranny of Laud. As Milton wrote, wittily playing on the derivation of the words, "New presbyter is but old priest writ large."[1] So the army and Cromwell stood for Independency, and suppressed the Presbyterians. But Independency, even though combined with as much toleration as Cromwell dared to grant, entirely failed to satisfy the great bulk of Englishmen, who not only wanted the restoration of the Prayer Book, which Cromwell was compelled to forbid, but also wanted to feel themselves members, not of some little experimental sect, but of a great Church, standing for all England and deeply rooted in the traditions of the past. There was, in fact, only one solution,

[1] Both words are derived from the Greek *presbuteros*, an elder.

preservation of a national Church and toleration for those who preferred to dissent from it. This did not come till the Toleration Act of 1689, and even then Unitarians and Roman Catholics were excluded from the benefits of the Act. In practice, however, toleration went beyond its legal limits.

After the Restoration, two thousand Puritan clergymen and their followers were driven out of the Church.[1] Those who held fast to their Puritan views became Dissenters, and were persecuted under the Clarendon Code, until the Roman Catholic schemes of James II. forced the Church to offer them terms of alliance, and so toleration. There was a change, too, in the social status of Puritanism. Before the Puritan Revolution, not only most of the wealthier townsfolk but many of the gentry had been Puritan. After the Revolution the Puritan Squire was but seldom seen in the land: he had learnt what Puritanism led to! So he made friends with his old enemy, the Anglican parson, and both combined to persecute the Puritan village grocer, now a Dissenter.

Yet the movement had done its work: it had established the family Bible, family prayers, and the "English Sunday" as fruitful traditions in English life. Indeed, two of the most remarkable products of Puritanism belong to the period after the failure of the Puritans to capture control of the Church: Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the Society of Friends, commonly called the Quakers.

(iii) *John Bunyan* (1628-1688). The best way to get a real understanding of what religion meant to the Puritans is to read the lives of some of their heroes, particularly the

[1] Surplices became compulsory again under the Act of Uniformity of 1662, but the sermon was preached in a black gown until the influence of the Oxford movement spread over England in the middle of the nineteenth century. There are still a few churches left where the surplice is not worn in the pulpit. Pepys notes in his Diary on 26 October, 1662: "To church, and there saw the first time Mr. Mills in a surplice; but it seemed absurd for him to pull it over his ears in the reading-pew, after he had done, before all the church, to go up to the pulpit to preach without it."

lives of those who have recorded their own spiritual experiences as Bunyan did in his *Grace Abounding* and George Fox in his *Journal.*

John Bunyan was the son of a tinker of Bedfordshire and learnt his father's trade, and served in the Parliamentary Forces in 1645, the year of Naseby. He learnt to read and write in childhood but, as has so often happened to the sons of the poor, forgot it again when he began to earn his living, and (as less often happens) learnt the art afresh from his wife. Like Abraham Lincoln he achieved supreme mastery of the literary style he needed for his purpose, without ever being, in the ordinary sense, an educated man.

Like so many of the great religious geniuses he suffered very deeply in his struggle for faith and salvation. For long he believed himself to be, like the hero of his *Pilgrim's Progress*, a dweller in the 'City of Destruction,' yet could find no way of getting away from it. He, too, bore a 'burden' on his back which he could not cast off. It was probably a real relief to him when, at the Restoration, the persecution of the sectaries began, and, as a Baptist preacher who refused to stop preaching, he was thrown into prison. Here he remained for most of the next twelve years studying his Bible and that favourite book of the Puritans, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, written during the reign of Elizabeth and commemorating the victims of Mary's persecution. During this imprisonment *Grace Abounding* was written, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* followed, written during a short imprisonment in 1675. During the later years of his life Bunyan was free from molestation, as the persecuting laws were not rigorously enforced after Charles II.'s Declaration of Indulgence; for the Church was beginning to feel the need of Puritan support in the reviving struggle with Rome as personified by the heir to the throne, the future James II. Bunyan became a leading preacher among the Baptists and received, owing to the fame of his books, the friendly nickname of 'Bishop Bunyan.'

Like Cromwell and Milton, he combined Puritan fervour with a large-minded tolerance. He realised that the special tenets of the Baptists were not the supreme truths of Christianity, and wished to combine diversity of Christian practice with unity of Christian fellowship. "Christ, not baptism," he writes, "is the way to the sheepfold." *The Pilgrim's Progress* is, considering its date, remarkably free from hits at Christian sects to which its author did not belong. "Giant Pope" is, it is true, set beside "Giant Pagan," but this is a solitary exception.

The Pilgrim's Progress enjoyed an immediate and enormous success, and is the greatest allegory in all literature. A hundred thousand copies were sold in the ten years between its publication (1678) and the author's death. This is a sale which many popular modern novelists would envy, in spite of the vast increase that has taken place both in the population itself and in the proportion of the population that have learnt to read. To-day the book is said to have been translated into over a hundred languages. Historians of English literature have called it the first great English novel. No writer except Shakespeare and Dickens has contributed so much to our common stock of popular phrases:—the Slough of Despond, Vanity Fair, Giant Despair, the Valley of Humiliation, all find their origin in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is the most vivid literary expression of Puritanism, as Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the most vivid literary expression of mediaeval Christianity. Dante's poem has, of course, a breadth and grandeur for which we cannot look in Bunyan's prose. The Dante of Puritanism is the author of *Paradise Lost*. But Bunyan presents life more as we ought to see it. In Dante earthly life seems crushed into insignificance between Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. But Bunyan shows us life as a great adventure: that is perhaps the secret of his success.

Two other books of Bunyan may be mentioned here. *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* is the tale of a Pilgrim

who took the wrong road, and never got away from the City of Destruction. It presents an interesting picture of seventeenth century commercial dishonesty. *The Holy War* depicts once again, in allegorical form, the conflict of good and evil, but the theatre is now not the single human soul but the whole world. The City of Mansoul has been founded by God, and its walls cannot be broken down except by its townsmen's consent. Diabolus rebels and makes war upon the City, and the citizens consent to parley with him. He persuades a party among the citizens that the Founder of the City is a tyrant, and Mr. Conscience is deposed from his office of Town Recorder, and the city surrendered. Then God intervenes, the treacherous citizens are defeated and punished. Yet the seed of treachery remains and later the War is renewed. The subject is far more difficult to handle than that of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, since the tale can have no ending short of the Day of Judgment. But it is full of splendid descriptions, especially of battle pieces. Bunyan seems to have drawn upon his old memories of the Civil War in which he fought, and when we read that " the handling of their arms was marvellously taking," we are reminded of the military side of Puritanism, and of Cromwell's " Trust God and keep your powder dry."

(iv) *George Fox* (1624-1691) *and the Society of Friends.* Of all the sects that sprang up amidst the ' religious anarchy ' of the Puritan Revolution the most admirable was the Society of Friends, commonly called the Quakers, a name which, first used in mockery like ' Whig ' and ' Tory,' has come to be accepted by the Friends themselves.

George Fox, like Bunyan, was of humble birth, and was apprenticed to a shoemaker of Drayton in Leicestershire. In youth his religious experiences were as vivid as Bunyan's, but otherwise markedly different and far happier. " People," he tells us with frank simplicity, " had generally a love to me for my innocency and honesty." At the age of nineteen

he was brought face to face with evil in the form of drink in the village public house. " When I had done what business I had to do I returned home but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down, and sometimes prayed and cried to the Lord, who said to me, ' Thou seest how young people go together unto vanity and old people unto the earth ; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be a stranger unto all.' Then at the command of God, on the ninth day of the seventh month, 1643, I left my relations and broke off all familiarity or fellowship with old or young."

Such was Fox's ' call ' to his life's work, a call as direct and vivid as those described by the Hebrew prophets. From this date onwards Fox believed himself to be in continual and direct communion with Christ, who ' opened to him ' what he should do and what forbear from doing. The general character of his message, and of the Society he founded, is disclosed by an incident at Nottingham in 1649. Entering a church he found a Puritan clergyman expounding the text " We have also a more sure word of prophecy," and enforcing the usual Puritan doctrine of the supreme authority of Scripture. Lifting up his voice against the preacher's doctrine, Fox declared that it was not by Scripture alone, but by the divine light by which the Scriptures were given, that doctrines ought to be judged. Thus Quakerism, though generally regarded as an extreme form of Puritanism, is really a reaction from the narrow and mechanical dependence on Scripture which was the weakest point in the orthodox Puritan's faith. The Puritan view implied that God had once given direct revelation to the Jews, and that revelation now only came indirectly through the study of the historical record of that ancient revelation. Fox, on the other hand, maintained that as God once revealed Himself to man so does He still do, directly. Over against the authority of Scripture he set the authority of the " Inner Light." This seems to come near the Catholic doctrine of a divinely

inspired Church. But the difference—and it is a very big difference—is that Fox was thoroughly Puritan in his individualism. The Catholic (whether Anglican or Roman) accepts the Divine Church with its organised hierarchy of priests as the medium of inspiration to whose authority the individual must bow. Fox, on the other hand, believed that God reveals Himself direct to the individual: his 'Society of Friends' was no Church but a league of individuals, without priests, without formal creeds, and without sacraments.

For his protest at Nottingham Fox was imprisoned under the Blasphemy Act. Indeed, he and his friends underwent several short terms of imprisonment even during the Commonwealth period. Their conscientious objection to taking oaths made them an object of suspicion. Puritans in general hated them and with some reason, for their doctrine was fundamentally opposed to Puritan orthodoxy. Bunyan's first published work, the only work he wrote before his imprisonment, is an attack on the Quakers. But the deep religious instinct and practical common-sense of Cromwell welcomed the new movement. Twice at least Cromwell and Fox, perhaps the two greatest Englishmen alive at that time, met and conversed. On the first occasion Cromwell said, "Come again to my house; for if thou and I were but an hour a day together, we should be nearer one another." On the second occasion Fox urged Cromwell "to lay down his crown at the feet of Jesus," a suggestion which Cromwell treated as rather a joke, and, as Fox tells us, "continued speaking against the light of Christ Jesus, and went away in a light manner." Perhaps Fox hardly realised how much he and all other Puritans were dependent for their very existence on the strong arm of Cromwell's government.

After the Restoration persecution began in earnest. In 1662 there were 4500 Quakers in prison, and 400 died there. But here, again, the Quakers distinguished themselves from the other Puritan sects. They alone persisted in meeting openly in time of persecution and refused to hold secret

assemblies for purposes of worship, a practice by which the other sectaries merely encouraged the suspicions of the government that they were engaged in treasonable plots. There is no doubt that by their steadfast courage in this matter the Quakers hastened the coming of toleration not only for themselves but for all Puritans alike.

In 1669 Fox married a moderately wealthy wife, and in his later years visited Holland, Germany, America and the West Indies. The Society of Friends was established as a distinct organisation in 1666. Unlike most of the Puritan sects after the Restoration its membership included many gentlemen of wealth and education, such as William Penn, the son of Cromwell's admiral and the founder of Pennsylvania. Fox died in 1691 and his *Journal* was published three years later, with an introductory account by Penn of "The Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers."

The central idea of Quakerism is an attempt to live the Christian life untrammelled by any of those external rules and customs which, intended as aids to Christianity, are so apt to become hindrances to it. It marks, in fact, the extreme of reaction from the faults characteristic of the Pharisees and of the mediaeval Church in its decline. They have no consecrated churches, only 'meeting-houses,' for one building is as sacred as another. They have no ministers, and no set form of service. They meet in silence, and it is open to any men or women at the meeting to offer prayer aloud, or quote, but not read, the Scriptures, or speak, according as he or she may feel inspired to do. They recognise no sacraments, for every action in life may be made a sacrament, or means of grace, according to the spirit in which it is done. They refuse to take an oath in law-courts or elsewhere, since in all his words man is under obligation to tell the truth. They refuse to join armies, since war is both the outcome and the cause of ambition, pride and hatred, and they consider that no end to be attained can justify the use of such means.

The most striking exploit of the Quakers was the foundation of Pennsylvania in 1676. The colony was to be run on Quaker principles, to be governed without armies, to convert the Indians to friendship and Christianity by kind and generous treatment, to administer justice without oaths, and establish toleration and equality of citizenship for all who professed belief in God. On the whole, these high principles were maintained with amazing success. Complete toleration was established from the first, and though force had to be used to suppress piracy, murderous warfare with the Indians, which had disfigured the history of all the earlier colonies (and not least the Pilgrim Fathers), was entirely avoided, and fair and friendly trade quickly sprang up between the two races. For this alone the Quakers deserve a very honourable place in the history of the British Empire.

Charles Lamb's beautiful little essay "A Quakers' Meeting" shows how the Quakers impressed one of the kindliest of men outside their own sect, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The essay opens: "Reader, wouldst thou know what true peace and quiet mean; wouldst thou find a refuge from the noise and clamour of the multitude; wouldst thou enjoy at once solitude and society; wouldst thou possess the depth of thy own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; wouldst thou be alone and yet accompanied; solitary, yet not desolate . . . :—come with me into a Quakers' Meeting."

CHAPTER XIX

METHODISTS AND EVANGELICALS

(i) *John Wesley* (1703-1791)

THE Elizabethan settlement survived almost unchanged into the eighteenth century, but only at the very serious cost of driving out from its midst many of those who wished to change it. As Bunyan said during his imprisonment, those who cared most for the spirit of prayer were to be found in the prisons and those who cared most for the form of prayer (*i.e.* the Prayer Book) were to be found in the alehouses! First came the expulsion of the Puritans after the Restoration: then the expulsion of the Non-jurors after the Revolution. The Non-jurors were eight bishops, four hundred clergy, and a considerable body of laity who, having taken the oath of allegiance to James II., felt that they could not honestly take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign who had seized his throne. We may regard their scruple as unreasonable; none the less, they were among the most earnest and distinguished members of the Church.

For this reason among others the Church throughout most of the eighteenth century was at a very low ebb. The laziness and indifference of bishops and clergy reached a point almost incredible to-day. Several bishops never went near their dioceses. In many churches services were only held once a month by a visiting curate hired for the purpose by a non-resident rector. It was an age when

'reason' was glorified as the highest of faculties and 'enthusiasm' condemned as the worst of follies. Tillotson, appointed Archbishop by William III. in place of the Non-juror Sancroft, and throughout the eighteenth century regarded as a model preacher, said in a sermon that Christianity "only requires of us such duties as are suitable to the light of nature and do approve themselves to the best reason of mankind." When this was the language of the clergy, there can be little wonder that the laity found small use for religion, and many of the most able, vigorous, and honest men abandoned Christianity altogether.

The one great and honoured name among the English bishops of this period is that of Bishop Butler (1692-1752), and it is interesting to notice that Butler was brought up as a Presbyterian. But Butler, though a great philosophic writer (his work, *The Analogy of Religion*, is one of the most important English contributions to the philosophy of religion), was not the man to stir popular enthusiasm. He seems to have frankly despaired of the prospects of religion in his day. It is said that, when he was offered the Archbishopric of Canterbury, he declined it on the ground that "it was too late for him to try to support a falling Church." [1]

When these words were spoken (1747) a little group of men, of whom Butler strongly disapproved, had already set about saving the falling Church. From 1729-1735 there existed in the gay, roystering, port-drinking University of Oxford, as it was in those days, a little society of dons and undergraduates nicknamed the Holy Club or the Methodists. There were sixteen members, including John Wesley and his brother Charles, and, near the end of the time, George Whitefield. They owed their inspiration to a book just published by a Non-juror, William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. They read and studied and debated

[1] Doubt has been thrown on this anecdote, but the fact that it has been generally believed is as good evidence of the state of the Church at the time as can be needed.

over the Greek Testament and the Early Fathers. Then they applied themselves to practical Christianity and took to visiting the fever-stricken prison, and holding services for its inmates. They also started a school in the slums of Oxford. In 1735 the society broke up and Wesley with some of his friends went as missionaries to America, where they proved completely unsuccessful with the rough colonials.

A fresh beginning of the movement that will always be associated with Wesley's name was made when Whitefield started preaching at Kingswood. Kingswood was a colliery district outside Bristol: there was no church or school, and the miners were not only savages but were frankly recognised as such by the government, which employed troops to prevent them from plundering Bristol. But Whitefield had a gift for popular open-air oratory equal to that of the Irishman Daniel O'Connell, or to anyone who ever lived. His congregations soon numbered two thousand, and the effects of his oratory were displayed by the white gutters made by the tears which trickled down their blackened faces. Whitefield was himself of humble birth and no great scholar, and Wesley, who was a scholar and a gentleman, was at first loth to do anything so unusual and 'enthusiastic'[1] as preaching in the open air. However, he took the plunge and at once found his life's work.

For the next *fifty-one* years, from 1739 to his death in 1791 at the age of eighty-seven, Wesley travelled continually up and down England and Scotland on horseback, preaching as he went. He averaged fifteen sermons a week and 5000 miles on horseback a year. Here is a typical day: "preached at Gloucester at five in the morning to two or three thousand people; at eleven preached at Runwick to more than a thousand, and again in the early afternoon; then at Stanley a sermon two hours long to about three thousand; and finally a sermon at Ebbly." It is all recorded in Wesley's

[1] It is a mark of the religious spirit of the eighteenth century that this word was commonly used as a term of disapproval.

Journal, which has been described as "the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned by man."

In his last years Wesley's pilgrimage often assumed the character of a triumphal procession, but at first it was very much the reverse. Both he and Whitefield, and the many disciples they enlisted in their work, had to endure persecution of the most practical kind, kicks and blows and maulings, and missiles ranging from eggs to the traditional 'half-brick.' To the ordinary prejudice against piety was added the respectable parson's prejudice against the field preacher who came interfering with his parish,—the old mediaeval quarrel of the rector with the itinerant friar revived. When Wesley was coming to Colne in Lancashire the enterprising curate announced that "if any man be mindful to enlist under the command of the Rev. George White for the defence of the Church of England, let him repair to the cross where he shall have a pint of ale in advance and other proper encouragements."

As a preacher Wesley reduced his style to the extreme of simplicity by reading over his sermons in the early days to an old maid-servant and crossing out every phrase she could not understand. His sermons were as effective as Whitefield's, though in a different way. His brother Charles assisted the movement chiefly by his hymns. The followers of Wesley were the first to realise the religious value of congregational hymn-singing, as distinguished from performances by professionals during which the congregation sat and slept or whispered among themselves. A glance at the names of Wesley, Newton, Cowper, Toplady, to name no more, in the Index of Authors in any modern hymn-book, will show how many of the most popular hymns spring from this movement.

But what made Wesley the leader of the movement was his gift for organisation, a gift which, combined with the stupid hostility of the Church, ultimately led him and half his followers outside the Church of England. Always

a scholar, he could justify each step he took by quoting the practices of the Early Church. First came the appointment of lay preachers. Then the formation of 'Societies,' on the lines of the old Oxford Holy Club, for mutual help and instruction. In all he did Wesley emphasised the idea of Christian fellowship: "The Bible," he said, "knows nothing of a solitary religion." Then came the need of Meeting Houses: for often the 'Societies' grew too large to meet in private houses, the churches were barred against them, and an alternative to the open air was, to say the least, convenient. Here his enemies found an ingenious means of persecution. One of the 'Societies' was prosecuted for meeting in an "unlicensed chapel." The only way of countering the prosecution was to take out a license, and by doing so the 'Methodists' (as we may already call them) became technically Dissenters. Finally, to meet the needs of his followers in the revolted American colonies, Wesley took the momentous step of sending a clergyman to America to ordain as many Methodists as the circumstances in America seemed to require.

In the English Church ordination can only be performed by the bishop. Wesley was convinced that in the primitive Church of the first century bishop and priest were different names for the same thing, from which fact he deduced that one priest could in eighteenth century England ordain another. As regards the historical facts of the primitive Church Wesley was probably right, but the deduction drawn from them is clearly illogical. In the last year of his life he wrote, "I never had any design of separating from the Church . . . I live and die a member of the Church of England, and none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it." None the less, by his action he had taken his stand as a rebel, and his followers had to choose between repudiating the action of their leader, and repudiating the Church of which their leader claimed membership to his dying day. Those who chose the former alternative and

remained Churchmen became part of the Evangelical Party (see next section): those who chose the latter and became Dissenters are known as Methodists.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of the movement of which Wesley was the leader. Three-quarters of the religious energy generated for the next hundred years both within the Church and among the Dissenting Churches can be traced back to it. During the same period in France Voltaire was attacking Christianity itself with a power and effect unknown in previous centuries, and Rousseau was preaching the doctrines of social revolution. When Wesley died the French Revolution had begun. How much England gained by remaining almost untouched by the revolutionary enthusiasm and how much she lost it is very hard to say. Those who think that she gained (and it is the usual view) by remaining outside the revolutionary area owe more thanks to Wesley than to any of the politicians. On this point a very good authority writes: "Many causes conspired to save England from revolution, but among them a prominent place must, I believe, be given to the new and vehement religious enthusiasm which was at that very time passing through the middle and lower classes of the people, which had enlisted in its service a large proportion of the wilder and more impetuous reformers, and which recoiled with horror from the anti-Christian tenets associated with the Revolution in France."[1]

(ii) *Evangelical clergy and laity.* While Wesley and his friends were travelling up and down England a new type of parish priest began to appear, roughly speaking, the hard-working, conscientious type that is happily common to-day. Among them, however, were exceptional men who had to cope with exceptional difficulties. The case of William Grimshaw, rector of Haworth, is interesting not only because

[1] Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 146 (cheap edition).

of the man himself, but because his experiences illustrate the type of society to be found in those wilder parts of England, which, fifty years later, were to be turned into centres of new population by the Industrial Revolution.

Haworth, the village where the Brontës afterwards wrote their novels, is on the edge of the Yorkshire moors. When Grimshaw arrived, in 1742, there had been no rector for some years, and Christianity, even in its outward forms, was apparently extinct. The dead were buried with drunken orgies but with no burial service. All the village lived in mortal terror of the demon Barguest, a phantom dog that roamed the moors at night. Grimshaw not only established Sunday services: he had methods of his own for getting a good congregation. As many as turned up for service of their own accord were given something to sing that would take time, preferably the 119th Psalm, while the rector went the round of the village ale-houses collecting the laggards. His methods of preaching were direct and to the point. Once the eloquent Whitefield came to preach at Haworth and began to praise the improvements that had taken place in the life of the village, whereupon Grimshaw sprang to his feet, and cried, "For God's sake do not speak so. I pray you do not flatter them. The greater part of them are going to Hell with their eyes open."

Such was one of the rough pioneers. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Cambridge had become a regular training school for the production of the new type of Evangelical parson, under the influence of Charles Simeon, fellow of King's College and vicar of Holy Trinity Church. Oxford, on the other hand, where the movement had been born, long hardened its heart, as is shown by a singular incident which occurred in 1768. Six harmless undergraduates were 'prosecuted' by their tutor before the Vice-chancellor of the university on the ground that they were "enthusiasts who talked of regeneration, inspiration, and drawing nigh to God." The prosecution was successful, and they were

expelled from the university as enemies of the Church of England.

In 1780 Robert Raikes, a layman and a friend of Wesley, founded a 'Sunday School' in Sooty Alley, Gloucester. He had begun life as a prison reformer, and turned to education on the principle that prevention was better than cure. His school differed from the Sunday schools of to-day in that there were no elementary schools to teach his children reading and writing, so that he had to begin not with the Bible, but with the alphabet. The hours were ten to twelve and one to five-thirty, the afternoon period including attendance at Church. The treatment sounds rigorous, but it is mildness itself compared with the twelve- and fourteen-hour days which children at that time had to work in the mines. The movement rapidly spread over the country and was taken up by both Churchmen and Dissenters.

The most conspicuous group of Evangelical laymen were the so-called " Clapham Sect," a group of wealthy Londoners resident in the then desirable suburb of Clapham. Their generosity helped to finance all the good works of the movement. The most conspicuous members of the " Sect " were William Wilberforce, member of Parliament and friend of Pitt, who, with Clarkson and some of the Quakers, took the lead in the movement for the abolition of the Slave Trade (carried through Parliament in 1807), and Hannah More, an indefatigable authoress of popular tracts, and promoter of Sunday schools.

(iii) *Church, Chapel, and the Industrial Revolution.* During the heyday of Methodism and Evangelicalism (roughly 1770-1830), the Industrial Revolution changed the whole character of English social life. Factory life, hitherto the exception, became the rule for a large part of the population. A comparatively small body of men found themselves, as a result of luck, cunning, or merit, in control not only of vast new sources of wealth, but also of an almost unlimited power over

the destinies of their fellow-men. As is well known and universally recognised to-day, the conscience of the new holders of power proved unequal to the strain that the new power laid on it. The wage-earners were unmercifully exploited: wages were forced down below starvation level: hours of work were stretched to a point that seems incredible —twelve, fourteen, fifteen hours a day. Worse still, children of any age from four or five upwards were put into the mills and the mines, and strained and tortured so that they grew up mere caricatures of humanity. In fine, the warfare between Capital and Labour, from which society still suffers to-day, was begun by the great crime committed by Capital. And statesmanship, as represented by the younger Pitt, the most powerful minister of the time, looked on and applauded it all as 'economical.'

The scientific study of the laws regulating the production and distribution of wealth, known as political economy or economics, was first fully elaborated during this period, and reinforced the natural selfishness of the rich with a variety of ingenious arguments.[1] Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), had attacked state interference with trade and upheld "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty"—which was taken to mean the liberty of the poor to starve and of the child to work in the mines. Burke (1795) had proved to his own satisfaction that since the poor were the tools of the rich, it was the obvious interest of the rich not to injure their tools, and therefore it might be assumed that the poor could be safely left to the care of their masters. Malthus, a clergyman,[2] proved (1798), as

[1] It is hardly fair to blame the economists for the result. In part, no doubt, their teaching was at fault, but the politicians neglected any arguments of the economists that made in favour of a fairer treatment of the poor and attended only to those that worked the other way.

[2] Shelley wrote that he "would rather go to hell with Plato and Bacon than to heaven with Paley and Malthus." (Paley was another contemporary clergyman who combined theology and economics.)

he sincerely believed, that the poor must always remain on the border line of starvation, since if they were paid higher wages they would only take the opportunity to have more children, and remain as poor as ever. Finally, Ricardo (1817) laid down the so-called "iron law of wages." Self-interest, he said, was the only possible motive force in industry. The laws governing wages were as mechanical and unalterable as the law of gravitation. The forces of supply and demand, sheer competition, fixed the market price of labour and fixed it at 'the minimum of subsistence,' *i.e.* the wage which would just suffice to keep the labourer alive and at work.

We have, then, to ask: What line did official Christianity take in this the greatest crisis of English history previous to the crisis that is following the war? As regards that part of the Church of England—and it was still the larger part—which was untouched by the Evangelical movement, we need hardly ask. True to its character, like the House of Lords in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, it "did nothing in particular and did it very well." In 1807 the Archbishop of Canterbury took the lead in securing the defeat in the House of Lords of a bill for the provision of elementary schools throughout England, and his action was typical of the Church he represented. But what line was taken by the Evangelicals? It must be admitted that they took a very bad line indeed.

We have seen that after Wesley's death the movement of which he was the leader split into two, the Evangelicals within the Church and the Dissenting Methodists. Roughly speaking, the Evangelicals were to be found among the rich and influential, and the Methodists among the wage-earners themselves. So the two bodies must here be treated separately.

Among the Evangelicals by far the most powerful in the sphere of politics was Wilberforce. His is a most perplexing character. Read the history of the crusade against the slavery of black men in the tropics and Wilberforce will

appear one of the heroes of the time : read the history of the enslavement (for such is the right word) of white men, women, and children in the factories of England, and Wilberforce will appear very like one of Dickens's immortal hypocrites, Uriah Heep or Mr. Pecksniff. For example, he played a leading part in promoting the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, which made illegal for a quarter of a century the only method by which the workers could improve their position, namely the Trade Unions. And why? In his *Practical View of the System of Christianity* he explains that " the more lowly path (of the poor) has been allotted them by the hand of God ; that it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties and contentedly to bear its inconveniences ; that the present state of things is very short ; that the objects about which worldly men conflict so eagerly are not worth the contest ; that the peace of mind which Religion offers indiscriminately to all ranks affords more true satisfaction than all the expensive pleasures that are beyond the poor man's reach ; that in this view the poor have the advantage ; that if their superiors enjoy more abundant comforts, they are also exposed to many temptations from which the inferior classes are happily exempted," etc. etc. If Dickens had composed this passage and put it into the mouth of one of his pious humbugs, we should have said that he had spoilt his effect by exaggeration.

Yet Wilberforce was not a hypocrite : he was simply a very earnest and, at bottom perhaps, a rather stupid man, with a very defective religion. He suffered from the opposite defect from that of the worldly man. He was ' other-worldly.' He was so impressed with the reality of the human soul, and the reality of eternity, that he failed to realise that the human soul is not independent in this life of the human body ; that to accept the conditions of life as they existed in the factories was to deny to half the population the possibility of development whether for soul or body. He denied, in fact, that cardinal and fruitful principle that

the Renaissance contributed to the Christian Church:[1] "How good is man's life!" "What a piece of work is a man!" But there was no good life for the sweated worker even if he did go to church on Sunday and listen to prayers and praises he had never been taught to understand. And if a man was indeed such a 'piece of work,' he ought not to be broken in childhood on the wheels of factory discipline.

Hannah More showed just the same blindness. She was teaching in a Sunday school in a Mendip mining village where the wages were a shilling a day and two hundred people were crammed into nineteen cottages. It never occurred to her that such conditions of life were a crying iniquity: she only deplored the immorality of the villagers, and comforted herself with the thought that the children "understood tolerably well the first twenty chapters of Genesis." During the first thirty years of the nineteenth century the championship of the factory workers was almost entirely in the hands of Free-thinkers influenced by the humanitarian ideals of the French Revolution.

After 1830, however, the Evangelical world produced a great leader of the cause of the poor in Lord Shaftesbury, whose unwearied efforts carried through Parliament in the teeth of the opposition of the mill-owners the great Factory Act of 1847.

When we pass from Church to Chapel we come out upon another world altogether. Methodism flourished nowhere so much as among the new industrial towns and villages of Lancashire and Yorkshire. Chapels sprang up everywhere, ugly little buildings paid for with the hard-earned coppers of their overdriven worshippers. It is impossible to exaggerate the benefit these must have derived from a worship which provided the one outlet for emotion and idealism in their drab lives. The masters were, as a rule, glad to encourage the chapel-going habit. It tended to keep the workmen docile. In fact, the spirit of its teaching was

[1] Cf. Part III. p. 206.

exactly the opposite of the spirit of the Trade Union movement. " It taught patience, where the Trade Union taught impatience. The Trade Union movement taught that men and women should use their powers to destroy the supremacy of wealth in a world made by men ; the Methodist, that they should learn resignation amid the painful chaos of a world so made, for good reasons of His own, by God." [1]

From the masters' point of view Methodism might seem a convenient and unexpected ally. At the moment Chapel and Trade Unionism might be rival claimants for the workers' scanty supply of spare energy and spare money. In the long run, however, it is probable that the Chapels helped the workers to train themselves to fight their own battles. They provided education in Sunday schools. Also the old Calvinistic system of democratic management helped to train the Chapel-goer in the arts of democracy for secular as well as religious purposes. The management of the Chapel affairs, the choosing of the minister, the committees and debates, even the little quarrels and faction-making that such affairs always involve :—all these things helped to fit the Chapel-goer to play his part in the Trade Union when, after 1824, Trade Unions ceased to be secret conspiracies and were again recognised by the law as the workman's organisation for defence.

[1] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*, p. 283.

CHAPTER XX

THE VICTORIAN AGE

(i) *State of the Church at the time of the Reform Bill*, 1832.

IF we take our stand at the date of the great Reform Bill which marks the real beginning of the Victorian Age, and look back over the history of the Established Church during the two hundred and seventy-three years since the Elizabethan settlement, it is impossible to regard that history as satisfactory or creditable. There had been two great religious movements originating in the Protestant wing of the Church, the Puritan movement and the Evangelical movement. Both had been wholly or partly driven out of the Church, and their force both within and without it was visibly ebbing. In the main the Church might fairly be described as a section of the old Tory party. Its bishops had voted against Catholic Emancipation, and they had voted against the Reform Bill. They were opposed in general to the reform of all abuses; and no wonder, for nowhere were abuses more rampant than in the Church. Many, perhaps most, of the bishops were simply amiable and respectable members of the idle rich class. Many of them enjoyed five-figure incomes, and distributed rich livings among members of their families. Archbishop Manners Sutton (1805-1828) gave sixteen rich livings, besides various cathedral appointments, to seven members of his family. A third of the clergy held more than one living apiece. It is said that one clergyman held two livings worth in all

£1200 and got the work of both done by curates at a total cost of £84 a year. Any number of examples could be given.[1]

In fact, the Church, though it contained many devout and energetic men, especially among the Evangelicals, had long lacked worthy leadership. Appointment of bishops was in the hands of the Prime Ministers, and bishoprics were the reward not of piety and energy, but of political intrigue. If we take the list of the Archbishops of Canterbury from the Reformation to the Reform Bill or, indeed, to thirty years later, and compare it with the list of the Popes during the two hundred and fifty years after Hildebrand (see Chapter XII.), it is impossible not to be struck with the enormous inferiority of the Archbishops in energy and idealism. There is not a single one among them that could be called a great man, unless it be Sancroft, who was expelled as a Non-juror. Or we might take another and more gratifying comparison and say, with truth, that the four Archbishops who cover the last fifty years, Archbishop Tait (1868-1882) and his three successors, have shown more statesmanship and more saintliness than all their predecessors from Matthew Parker onwards (1559-1868).

In 1832, the year of the Reform Bill, Dr. Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby, wrote, "the Church, as it now stands, no human power can save." There was, in fact, a new spirit abroad, the spirit of modern Liberalism, applying with more caution and moderation the ideas of the French Revolution to English institutions, and the Reform Bill would give the Liberalism of the middle classes the control of English politics. That Liberalism was ready and eager to ask the Church, "What are you *doing* with all the power

[1] The twin evils of plurality (of livings in the possession of one man) and non-residence were common throughout the Middle Ages and had never been eradicated. Even the energetic and conscientious Laud held the rich living of Lydd in Kent and never visited it. Only in the Victorian Age was this evil finally eradicated.

and the wealth that the nation has hitherto allowed you to retain?" To that question no very satisfactory answer could be given.

In 1831 an anonymous pamphlet appeared, entitled *The Extraordinary Black Book*. Its title was an allusion to the famous "Black Book" prepared by Thomas Cromwell's officials for Henry VIII. previous to the abolition of the monasteries. This new "Black Book" was written in a hostile spirit and contained a few exaggerations, but in the main its facts were correct and it created a wide impression. It gave an account of the revenues of the Church and the uses to which they were put. It asserted that the clergy of the Church of England cost seven times as much as the Catholic Church in France, and yet ministered to no more than eight million people.

Some reforms soon followed. In 1835 Peel appointed an Ecclesiastical Commission of five bishops and four laymen to investigate the uses of Church property. As a result, the incomes of the wealthiest bishops were reduced, the number of canonries attached to cathedrals diminished, and altogether a better distribution of the wealth of the Church was effected. In 1838 an Act was passed forbidding Pluralities, *i.e.* the holding by one clergyman of more than one living, except under special circumstances and with a license from the Archbishop.

But such reforms, though necessary, were merely negative and touched only the fringe of the problem. You cannot revive religion in a Church by Acts of Parliament. However, a new and remarkable religious revival had just begun.

(ii) *The Oxford Movement* (1833-1845) *and its results.* We have seen how the Elizabethan settlement was a compromise designed to satisfy as far as possible two parties: the Catholics who, while ceasing to be *Roman* Catholics and repudiating the Pope and various 'errors' (such as the sale

of Indulgences) which had crept into the Roman Church in comparatively recent times, considered themselves the true heirs of the Church of the best period of the Middle Ages; and the Protestants who inclined to the doctrines of the Reformed Churches of the Continent, which they considered had returned to the true doctrines of primitive or Pauline Christianity, and laid their emphasis on the Bible and the faith of the individual rather than on the traditions of a divinely guided Church. Both parties had persisted in the Church, the Catholic party represented by Andrewes, Laud, and the Non-jurors, and the Protestant represented by the Puritans and the Evangelicals.

The great religious revival of the nineteenth century, the Oxford movement, came from the Catholic party, which since the days of the Non-jurors had been almost extinct as a living religious force. The Oxford movement, as has been said, took as its text the almost forgotten clause in the creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." As John Henry Newman (1801-1890), its greatest leader, wrote, "I have ever kept before me that there was something greater than the Established Church, and that was the Church Catholic and Apostolic, set up from the beginning, of which she was but the local presence and organ." In the eyes of Newman and his friends the Reformation had been a disaster, due in part to the wickedness of Rome, but due also to the blindness and intemperance of the Reformers. The so-called Protestant Churches were like plants cut off from their roots. They had no tradition except the barren tradition of protest against Rome. Their religious revivals, such as that associated with Wesley, had been purely emotional, and, lacking root in tradition, had withered away when the original impulse was spent. The Church of England, on the other hand, though it had long thought of itself as Protestant, possessed in its Prayer Book, which was an English translation but slightly adapted from ancient Catholic service books, and in its bishops, who could trace unbroken descent

by ordination back through the Middle Ages to the primitive Church, all the essentials of a true branch of the Catholic Church.

The origin of the movement is generally traced to a sermon preached by Keble in 1833 and published under the title of *National Apostasy*. Keble was already well known as the author of *The Christian Year*, a collection of tender and graceful religious poems arranged as a kind of commentary on the Prayer Book, each poem being allotted to a Sunday or a Saint's day and usually developing the idea of the epistle or gospel for the day. The poems of *The Christian Year* were known by heart in thousands of families throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century. The sermon on *National Apostasy* was simply a proclamation of the dangers threatening the Church. As a result first of Catholic Emancipation, and secondly of the enfranchisement of masses of middle-class Dissenters by the Reform Bill, the Church was now at the mercy of a Parliament bound by no ties of loyalty to the Establishment. In this emergency the Church must proclaim its divine character and rouse its rightful leaders, the bishops, to assert the authority that they derived from God alone.

But Keble would have made little impression outside Oxford without Newman, who quickly constituted himself the real leader of the revival. Newman at this date was a Fellow of Oriel college and vicar of St. Mary's Church: he was a man of striking appearance and great charm of manner, and he had command of a literary style as effective, both in argument and in rhetoric, as that of any writer of English. He did not, like Wesley or St. Paul, undertake the life of a travelling missionary. He made Oxford his headquarters, and by his sermons created a band of ardent disciples among the rising generation. To the wider public he appealed by his pen. In September, 1833, he started a series of pamphlets called *Tracts for the Times*, most, though not all, of which he wrote himself: ninety of

these tracts appeared in the course of the following eight years.

The first tract, addressed to the clergy, is an uncompromising attack on all that was conventional and easy-going in the Church, and an open glorification of what many regard as the errors of the Middle Ages, its superstitions, its asceticism, its intolerance. The second tract, entitled *The Catholic Church*, is an equally vigorous attack on Erastianism, *i.e.* the theory that the State ought to control the Church. The earlier tracts were quite frankly intended to create a stir, to provoke controversy and irritation. They were journalism of a high order. As they succeeded in drawing attention, the tracts grew longer, more learned, and more argumentative. But some people soon began to ask, is not this Popery in disguise? The Roman Catholics had only just been admitted to the full privileges of citizenship: old men were still alive who could remember the 'No Popery' riots of Lord George Gordon in 1780. There was still a strong feeling that Roman Catholicism was a subtle and dangerous conspiracy against religious truth and national independence.

Suspicion was deepened by the publication, in 1838, of the *Remains* of Hurrell Froude, an ally of Keble and Newman, who had recently died, and whose writings and character expressed all that was most intolerant and aggressive in the movement. One product of these controversies was the erection of the well-known Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford. Froude was reported to have said: "I never heard any good of Cranmer except that he burnt well"; so the Protestants of Oxford expressed in visible form their reverence for Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer (who had been burnt at Oxford in the reign of Mary) as a protest against what was coming to be called 'Tractarianism.'

The climax came with the ninetieth tract (1841), entitled *Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles*. The tract opens: "It is often urged and sometimes felt and granted that there are in the Articles propositions or terms

inconsistent with the Catholic faith." The object of the tract is " to show that, while our Prayer Book is acknowledged on all hands to be of Catholic origin, our Articles, alas ! the offspring of an uncatholic age, are, through God's good providence, to say the least, not uncatholic, and may be subscribed by those who aim at being Catholic in heart and doctrine."

The Thirty-nine Articles had been drawn up by Cranmer and were published in 1553, just after the Second and more definitely ' Protestant ' Prayer Book of Edward VI. They were intended not as a complete confession of faith but as an instrument for excluding from the Church certain errors both of the Roman Church and of the extremer Protestant sects. In 1563 they were revised by Parker with a view to conciliating the moderate and non-Roman Catholic elements in the Church, and after Elizabeth's excommunication an Act of Parliament ordained that all the clergy should subscribe to them. A modern writer may approach these Articles from two points of view. He may, on the one hand, take them in conjunction with the history of the times in which they were written and attempt to explain what their authors originally meant by them. On the other hand, he may treat them as a lawyer is bound to treat an Act of Parliament and, ignoring their historical origin and the supposed intentions of their authors, concentrate solely on their text and interpret the actual meaning of words used. Newman's method was the second of these, and his opponents felt that he had used his literary skill to extract from the Articles a Catholic interpretation which they would not really bear. On the whole it may be said that Newman's conclusions were sound. No doubt his interpretation is not the *only* sound interpretation of the Articles, and it was certainly not the interpretation that had been current in the Church during the last two centuries, but it was a logical interpretation, and the Articles had been purposely framed, as was all the rest of the Elizabethan settlement, to satisfy diversities of

religious opinion, and to exclude only extremists, whether Catholic or Protestant.

Anyhow, war was now declared on Newman and his friends. The Bishop of Oxford requested that the issuing of the tracts should be discontinued, and two years later Pusey, one of the most prominent leaders of the movement, was for two years suspended by the Vice-Chancellor from preaching within the university on the ground that he had 'taught certain things disagreeing with and contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England.' In 1844, W. G. Ward of Balliol, one of the most ardent of the disciples, published *The Ideal of a Christian Church*, in which he claimed the right to accept the whole of the doctrines of the Roman Church while remaining a member of the Church of England. The University condemned his book and deprived him of his B.A. and M.A. degrees:—for at that date (and until 1871) membership of the university was limited to members of the Church of England. Ward then joined the Roman Church; several of his friends followed him, and, a few months later, Newman himself.

The secession of Newman seemed like a death-blow to the movement. "We always said it was bound to come to that!" was the triumphant rejoinder of its enemies. But Keble and Pusey stood firmly Anglican, and it was soon found that, though the movement, as an 'Oxford movement,' was over, its wider work in the Church of England was only beginning. One more last service Newman was long after to render to the cause he had abandoned. In 1864 he published the history of his religious opinions down to the time of his secession, under the title of *Apologia pro Vita sua* (Defence of his Life). The extraordinary charm of the narrative made it at once a classic autobiography, and restored its author to his rightful place in the minds of Englishmen as one of the greatest religious geniuses this country ever produced. On the whole it may fairly be said that Newman not only set going a great revival in the Church

of England, but taught Englishmen of all creeds to form a juster and more kindly opinion of the Church of Rome: for people realised that the Church which held the allegiance of such a man as Newman could not be so base as was commonly supposed.

One of the results of the Oxford movement was the appearance of a new type of bishop, the type which is almost universal to-day. The old 'idle rich' bishop gradually disappeared and made way for the working bishop, the active director of every kind of diocesan activity, a man who takes his day's work every bit as seriously as a cabinet minister or a first-rate man of business. In converting the episcopate the Oxford movement succeeded where the Evangelical movement had failed. One of the first of the 'new bishops' was Samuel Wilberforce,[1] (1805-1873) bishop, first of Oxford and afterwards of Winchester, a man of untiring energy in the organisation of his diocese. He was as eloquent and witty as he was energetic. His eloquence gained him the nickname of 'Soapy Sam,' and his ready wit enabled him to reply to one who asked him why he was so called: "Because," he said, "I am always getting into hot water and always come out of it with clean hands."

But the new bishops were not all "High Churchmen," as the disciples of the Oxford leaders were called. Among them may be mentioned Tait (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1868-1882), probably the greatest Archbishop of Canterbury since the Middle Ages, and Temple, who became bishop of Exeter in 1869 and died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1902. When Temple left Exeter, his Dean said to him, "Every clergyman is half-unconsciously doing twice as much as he did before, and they all say it is your doing." Both of these were 'Broad Churchmen' (see page 287).

Perhaps no one played a greater part in the raising of the general level of the episcopate than Lord Shaftesbury, who called himself 'an Evangelical of the Evangelicals.' Lord

[1] Son of the famous leader of the 'Clapham sect.'

Palmerston, during his ten years as Prime Minister (1855-1865), employed his cousin Lord Shaftesbury as his 'bishop-maker,' and the result was that good men of all parties in the Church were chosen and promotion no longer depended on social or political influence.

Another and less obviously good result of the Oxford movement was the so-called 'ritualistic controversy' which raged throughout the last half of the century. The Oxford leaders had concentrated on doctrine and concerned themselves very little with ritual, but it was inevitable that revival of Catholic doctrines should lead to a revival of Catholic ceremonial. The extremer section of the Evangelical party were strongly hostile and instituted a series of prosecutions of ritualistic clergy. Serious difficulties were involved. Firstly, many of the prosecuted clergy denied the authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (which was the supreme authority in such cases), to pass judgment on them, since the court was a State-made institution. Secondly, the 'Ornaments Rubric,' that is to say, the directions for the proper ordering of services contained in the Prayer Book, were found on examination to be ambiguous and confused. Among the bishops there was great division of opinion, and many, even if they disliked ritualistic practices, were unwilling to drive out of the Church some of its most energetic and devoted clergy.

In the long run the ritualists gained their point, and the result should not be regretted even by those who are not in sympathy with them. Good clergy are never too common, and the Elizabethan plan of finding room in the Church for diversities of opinion and practice on minor points is the sound rule, especially for a Church whose ideal is to be a national institution. Nor should the long controversy itself be entirely regretted. Keen controversy, even if it become occasionally bitter, has its value. We have seen how the enormous claims of Hildebrand on behalf of the Papacy, though impossible of realisation, played a great part in

educating the mind of the Middle Ages. In the same way, the ritualistic controversies of the Victorian Age, though they may have shocked and disgusted some, brought many also to take a keen interest in the history, traditions, and practices of the Church.

So much may fairly be said. But the whole controversy showed the lamentable inability of the Church to speak with a *living* voice on a disputed point. The questions at issue had to be decided by antiquarian research into the meaning of statutes and rubrics three centuries old, and perhaps even to the most vigorous and learned controversialists it may sometimes have occurred to wonder whether this was the right method of meeting the spiritual needs of the nineteenth century. The doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Elizabethan ecclesiastical legislation is open to all the same objections as the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible.

(iii) *The "Christian Socialists."* Both of the two parties that in the Victorian period divided the religious energy of the Church between them, the Evangelicals and the Oxford movement, were lamentably indifferent to the crying social evils of English industrial life. Among the Evangelicals Lord Shaftesbury was quite an exception. The majority held that "God made some men poor just as He made some men black: Scripture guaranteed that poverty and blackness were alike immutable: the Christian was no more concerned with the white man's hovel or wages than with the Ethiopian's skin: his duty was to bring to white and black alike the blessed news of salvation from sin and of a glorious immortality for those that believe . . . Of the hopelessness of working on purely individualistic lines he, in common with the general thought of his time, had no understanding whatever."[1] The Oxford leaders, on the other hand, were not merely blind to the need of social reform; they were often positively hostile to it as being a part of that liberalism

[1] Raven, *Christian Socialism*, p. 10.

which they regarded as the enemy of the Faith. Newman, quite near the end of his life, said that he "had never considered social questions in their relation to faith and had always looked upon the poor as objects for compassion and benevolence."

To-day it is recognised that the Church must try not only to train up Christian individuals but to secure that the relations of man with man are based on Christian principles: the former aim is the end, but it can never be reached unless the latter aim is also pursued unflinchingly. The group of men who first emphasised this idea within the Church boldly took for themselves in 1848 the name of "Christian Socialists." At that date Socialism was a name even more dreaded by the respectable than it is to-day. It was associated with the blood-stained riots that had accompanied the suppression of the socialistic experiment of National Workshops in Paris in the spring of that year. The only conspicuous English Socialist hitherto, Robert Owen, had, by an unfortunate coincidence, been also a keen opponent of Christianity. The Christian Socialists, however, were determined to rescue Socialism from its ill-repute and to show that properly understood it meant simply the application of Christian principles to industrial organisation. The key-note of Christianity was love: the key-note of Socialism, as they understood it, was co-operation in place of competition, and co-operation is the application of the spirit of love to the organisation of industry.

The four leading figures in the movement, two laymen and two clergymen, were all remarkable men. The brains of the movement, so far as practical organisation was concerned, was John Ludlow, a barrister who had been educated in France and was in touch with the French Socialist leaders. The other layman was Thomas Hughes, soon afterwards famous as the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, himself an ideal specimen of the 'typical public school man.' Of the two clergymen, Charles Kingsley was the most effective spokes-

man of the movement, a vigorous radical country parson, whose pamphlet *Cheap Clothes and Nasty* is a thorough exposure of the evils of sweated labour. Its lesson was afterwards expanded in *Alton Locke*, the autobiography of a Cockney tailor poet, with which Kingsley won his reputation as a novelist.

But the man whom they all revered as their leader was Frederick Denison Maurice, professor of Divinity at King's College, London, and chaplain of Lincoln's Inn. Maurice is in many ways the most attractive and in spirit the most ' modern ' of the religious leaders of England in the Victorian Age. While the Evangelicals were enslaved by an over-literal interpretation of Biblical texts, and the Oxford leaders by an over-dogmatic interpretation of doctrines, so that both parties assailed with unchristian vehemence other Christians who disagreed with them on these points, Maurice ever kept his mind focused on the spirit of Christ Himself and sought fellowship with all who shared that spirit, however different the forms in which they expressed it. It is to Maurice more than to any other leader in the Church that we owe our deliverance from the appalling doctrine that God (whom we believe to be the God of Love) will condemn sinners to eternal punishment in Hell. For his unorthodox views on this and other subjects he was deprived of his professorship in 1853. Unfortunately Maurice was not a good leader. His literary style was difficult and confused, and in practical affairs his humility and his gift for seeing with painful clearness the difficulties and objections in the way of any particular course, made him hesitating and irresolute.

In 1848 the group started a weekly paper called *Politics for the People*. In its first leading article they write : " Politics have been separated from Christianity ; religious men have supposed their only business is with the world to come ; political men have declared that the present world is governed on entirely different principles from that . . . But Politics for the People cannot be separated from Religion

. . . The world is governed by God ; this is the rich man's warning : this is the poor man's comfort."

In the course of the six following years (1848-1854) they promoted and supervised a series of experimental Associations in a variety of trades—tailors, builders, shoemakers. The workers elected their managers, and profits were devoted in various ways to the benefit of the associated workers instead of going to employers or capitalist shareholders. The Associations were, in fact, minute ' toy-models ' of the National Guilds, advocated as the ideal future industrial organisation by Guild Socialists to-day.

All these practical undertakings failed, and for a variety of reasons. The workers were uneducated and inexperienced, mere children compared with the Trade Unionists of the twentieth century : the one great Trade Union of that period, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, began to take a friendly interest, but was in 1852 absorbed in the first great English strike, after which it had no funds or energy to spare : also, the Christian Socialists themselves lacked economic knowledge and experience. There was not a single business man of importance among them.

It is easy to say the movement failed. It is easy to point to mistakes and absurdities in the methods and utterances of its leaders. The refusal of Maurice and Kingsley to support the great Engineers' Strike of 1852 will seem to many to be industrial ' pacifism ' of the most futile description. None the less, some failures are worth more than successes. The " Christian Socialists " lit a candle which has not been put out. Ever since their failure there have been more and more professed Churchmen who, whether they call themselves Socialists or not, have realised that Christianity and Politics cannot be kept in separate compartments, and that it is part of the work of the Church to protest against every form of social injustice and to take its stand on the economic and political battlefield where the fight against social injustice has to be fought. The task in which they temporarily failed

was taken up again forty years later by the Christian Social Union, and is carried on by the Industrial Christian Fellowship.

After the failure of their experiments, the Christian Socialists turned to education and founded the Working Men's College in North London, which has lasted ever since and done good work. They had made a gallant frontal attack; and after its failure they rightly turned to the slower and less exciting but surer methods of education.

(iv) *Nonconformity.* The Nonconformists or Dissenters are the members of the Protestant Churches who at various times and for various reasons have split off from the Established Church. This history has already noticed the chief occasions of these separations. They are three in number. The earliest Nonconformists were the Sectaries or extremer Puritans who left the Church of England as early as Elizabeth's reign. They were followed by a far larger body when the Puritans in general left the Church after the Restoration. Lastly came the secession of the followers of Wesley more than a hundred years later.

To-day the Nonconformists are about equal in numbers with the Church of England, so far as England and Wales are concerned: but if we take into account the whole English-speaking world in the British Empire and the United States, the Nonconformists are at least four times as numerous as members of the Anglican Church in England and abroad. The Nonconformists are divided into a very large number of separate Churches, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, etc., but on the whole these divisions do not now mark differences of religious outlook. Indeed, it may be said that in the Nonconformist world there is variety of organisation combined with unity of religious outlook, while in the Church of England there is unity of organisation combined with variety of religious outlook. All Nonconformists are essentially Protestant, whereas the Church of

England is divided between Protestant and Catholic, the Evangelical tradition and the Oxford movement tradition.

The religion of the bulk of the Nonconformists [1] is not markedly different from that of the Evangelicals. It is a Bible-religion rather than a Church-religion. They emphasise the emotional appeal of Christianity to the individual soul. They stand by Luther's doctrine that ' all believers are priests ' and regard their ministers as fellow-workers and helpers, but not as inheritors by ordination of a special divine privilege. The question on which they differ from the Evangelicals is political rather than religious. They are opposed to the very idea of an Established Church. " They believe," writes a leading Nonconformist, " that it is contrary to the very genius of Christianity that it should require the countenance and support of the State, and they believe that the State connexion is a real hindrance to the spiritual development of the Church. They know that this view is shared by many Anglicans, and they feel with them that in advocating disestablishment they are acting in the highest interests both of religion and of the Church itself."

The external history of Nonconformity during the Victorian Age is an important chapter in the history of the growth of toleration. The Toleration Act of 1689 had given the Nonconformists the right to worship after their own fashion, but it had given them nothing else. At the beginning of the nineteenth century they were still unable to hold any public office, to enter Oxford and Cambridge Universities, to be married in their own churches or buried according to their own rites, and they had to pay church rates for the maintenance of the parish church. As always happens when a group of people are unjustly treated, they were also suspected of disloyalty to the government that treated them unjustly, and of harbouring ' revolutionary ' ideas, even though, as has

[1] Exceptions are the Quakers (see p. 247), the Unitarians, and some small sects whose outlook is more characteristic of the seventeenth than of the twentieth century.

been shown already, the influence of 'chapel' in the new centres of industry was on the whole unfavourable to the growth of the 'revolutionary' Trade Unions. It was a great scandal to many Churchmen that Nonconformists were allowed to co-operate with the Evangelicals in the work of the Bible Society, founded in 1804 for missionary purposes.

The story of the removal of these disabilities one by one by a series of Acts of Parliament covers the period from 1828, the date of the repeal of the Test Act, to 1880, the date of the Burials Act. The only grievance of this character that now remains is in connexion with elementary education, in that Nonconformists have to support, as ratepayers, 'Church schools' in which the doctrines of the Church of England are taught. The difficulty of removing this grievance lies in the fact that the schools in question were originally built, and are still maintained so far as the building fabric is concerned, by the Church of England, and it seems almost impossible to redress the grievance of the Nonconformists without inflicting another grievance in some form or other on the members of the Established Church. The problem is further complicated by the fact that there are also a certain, though much smaller, number of schools that were built and are still maintained, as regards the fabric, by Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. During the years 1906-1908 the Liberal Government made a determined effort to find a solution that would satisfy all sides. They failed, and since then the question has, very wisely, been dropped out of controversial politics.

Owing to their position Nonconformists have been as closely associated with the Liberal party as the Established Church with the Conservatives. In their efforts to redress their own grievances they have helped on many other good causes besides their own. Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish 'Liberator,' publicly testified to the debt which Roman Catholics owed to the Nonconformists in helping to bring about Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and they were also the

backbone of the agitation for the Reform Bill of 1832, which enfranchised the Nonconformist 'lower-middle' classes. The Liberal Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, said: "I know the Dissenters. They gave us the emancipation of the slave. They gave us the Reform Bill. They gave us Free Trade. And they will give us the abolition of Church Rates." And Lord Palmerston said: "In the long run English politics will follow the consciences of the Dissenters." Neither of these Premiers was a Nonconformist.

Nonconformity has often been criticised on the ground that its main idea has been negative rather than constructive, namely, opposition to the Established Church. This seems no more reasonable than to criticise, let us say, the Poles of the pre-War period on the ground that their main idea was opposition to Germany and Russia. We can only condemn the Nonconformists for opposition if we regard their grievances as unreasonable. None the less, there is no doubt that their religious life suffered from being too much pre-occupied with political grievances, and the removal of the grievances has benefited them in an inward as well as in an outward sense. The 'opposition' habit of mind is dying out. The tendency to drop the words 'Nonconformists' and 'Dissenters,' and to speak of themselves rather as "the Free Churches" is a good sign.

Two of the most remarkable Nonconformist leaders of the Victorian Age were Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) and General Booth (1829-1912). Spurgeon was the most popular preacher of the nineteenth century. To find his parallel we must go back to Wesley and Whitefield. At the age of twenty-two he was already preaching to congregations of from seven to ten thousand, and his influence continued unabated for more than thirty years. His headquarters was the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. On one occasion he preached to twenty-four thousand people in the Crystal Palace. He preached extempore, and the sermons, taken down in shorthand for publication, were sold "by tons,"

and have been translated into many languages. Spurgeon was not at all a well-educated man and his ideas on such subjects as the interpretation of the Bible belonged to a by-gone age; but he was clear, forcible, simple, highly emotional, and overflowing with humanity and humour.

General Booth succeeded in carrying Christian enthusiasm into realms of vice, poverty, and ignorance, where it had never penetrated before. His work had much of the quality of that of the early Friars. The Salvation Army, founded under its present name in 1878, but originating in the experiment of the "Hallelujah Band" at Walsall fifteen years earlier, expresses the idea of "the Church militant here on earth" in a dramatic form. Like all original religious geniuses Booth had his share of persecution. A parody of his organisation called "The Skeleton Army" was organised to break up his meetings, and for many years (in the 1880's) Booth's followers were subjected to fine and imprisonment for breach of the peace. Soon, however, he received that sincerest form of flattery which is imitation, and the Church Army was founded to carry on work on similar lines on behalf of the Established Church. Booth, like Wesley, combined with his missionary gifts an unusual degree of skill in practical organisation. It is as yet too soon to say how well the organisation he founded will be able to carry on when the impetus his own personality gave it has declined.

(v) *Faith and Science.* The Victorian Age witnessed an immense advance in all the sciences. The mere machinery of life was transformed out of all knowledge by the introduction of railways, telegraphy, and so forth:—that is well known, and it is not, from the standpoint of religion, important. What is important from the standpoint of religion is that science at the same time transformed our habits of thought. The result was what is sometimes called "the conflict of religion and science." It would have been better if it had been called "the conflict of churchmen and

scientists," for there is no real conflict between true science and true religion, and the quarrels that arose were due to churchmen on one side and scientists on the other failing to realise where the boundary line between science and religion lay. It must also be admitted that the Church was more to blame than the scientists for the contentions that arose.

Science in the widest sense means the growing body of organised knowledge about *material* things. By material things we mean not only lifeless substances, like the subject-matter of chemistry, but all that can be apprehended through the senses: thus the human body is subject-matter for science and the human mind also in its physical aspects: and a document written by a human being is material of scientific knowledge just as much as a fossil. Science is concerned with what happened at the battle of Waterloo just as much as with what happened at an eruption of Vesuvius.

Religion, on the other hand, in its widest sense, is a belief in the existence of non-material (*i.e.* spiritual) forces or personalities with which it is possible for men to establish contact, through prayer or otherwise. Christian religion involves, of course, much more than this: it involves beliefs as to the character of the Divine Person, and the belief that a particular man, Jesus of Nazareth, was Himself the Divine Person in human guise.

It ought to be clear at once from the two preceding paragraphs of definition that there is no contradiction between any particular piece of scientific knowledge about *material* things and *religious* belief, which is not concerned with material things. How then did these conflicts arise? They arose because each party tried to apply its arguments outside their proper sphere, scientists laying down the law about spiritual things and Churchmen about material things.

The mistake of the men of science was on these lines. Scientific studies disposed a good many people to believe that no knowledge lies outside the sphere of science, that all

talk of spiritual things is moonshine, that the universe is a vast mechanism, that every fact is capable of a materialistic explanation. We need not consider here whether this view, which is called 'materialism,' is true or not; but it is important to notice that 'science,' properly understood, does not, and does not pretend to, prove it true. 'Science' says:—"My business is with material facts": it does not say:—"There are no facts except material facts." Materialism is not scientific knowledge. It is a theory, a faith, a kind of anti-Christian religion, and as between it and Christianity, science is neutral, having nothing to do with the matter.

The mistake of the Churchmen was somewhat as follows. Christianity has a long history behind it, and its Scriptures date from a time when science barely existed. Now the purpose of Christianity, as of any other religion, is practical: its aim is not so much to put forward a certain theory as to form and encourage a certain type of character: not to analyse God, but to love Him. With this practical purpose in view, this purpose which involves appealing to the emotions rather than to the intellect, religion will always make use of material images to express its idea of God. It will speak of God as if He were a man: it will describe His actions as if they were human actions. But as soon as we begin to describe God's action *in the material sphere*, even though our real purpose is to show the nature not of material but of spiritual things, we enter the sphere of science, about which we must accept what the scientific experts tell us.

A single familiar example will suffice. In the first chapter of Genesis we have an account of how God created the world. We believe as Christians that God revealed Himself to the leaders of the Israelites in so far as they were capable of understanding Him (for to no finite human being can there be a complete revelation of the Infinite Godhead), and we find in that first chapter a great spiritual truth, namely, that God created the world for the sake of man and from love for man. But the author of that chapter, being ignorant of

science as we understand it, gives an account of the *material* order of creation which modern science shows to be quite wrong. Two notable books of the early Victorian period proved this more conclusively than before, *Vestiges of Creation* (1844), by Robert Chambers, and *The Origin of Species* (1859), by the naturalist Charles Darwin. Churchmen to-day have accepted the scientists' accounts of these things, but most Churchmen of sixty years ago took their stand on the belief that every word of the Bible was true, whether it dealt with scientific or religious topics, and that therefore geology and evolution must be false. No wonder then that scientific men confused Christianity with its mistaken defenders and said Christianity must be false. When *The Origin of Species* appeared, Bishop Wilberforce, who knew nothing about science, reviewed the book in the *Quarterly Review* and believed he had demolished arguments which he regarded as 'atheistical.' In the following year Wilberforce attempted to debate the point with the biologist Huxley at the meeting of the British Association. Naturally, he was badly worsted in argument, and, as a modern Church historian says, "his attempt to destroy Darwinian theory by theological weapons damaged the current theology more than it damaged the theory."

During the same period historical science was doing even more than the physical sciences to change men's habits of mind in matters closely concerning religion. The historical study of the Bible, which is sometimes called 'higher criticism,' though almost entirely carried out by religious men, was reaching conclusions which seemed obnoxious and even 'atheistical' to those who did not study the matter themselves.[1] It was found that most of the books of the Bible were not written contemporaneously with the events they record; that as scientific history they are inaccurate and misleading. We can now see that all this scientific historical work has made the Bible far more valuable, far more inter-

[1] See Part I., ch. 1 of this book.

esting, far more intelligible to us than it was before. But it upset the old doctrine of 'verbal inspiration,' the belief that every word of the Bible was literally and scientifically true, and so the critics were treated as Darwin was treated, and regarded as enemies of Christianity.

So there was warfare not only between the Church and the scientists, but also between those within the Church who held obstinately to the old views and those others within the Church whose belief in Christianity was more robust, and who held that the results of science must be welcomed and felt confident that they would not and could not injure religion. These latter were known as 'Broad Churchmen,' and they were opposed both by the High Church or Oxford party and by the Evangelicals. It is not necessary to follow the controversy through all its stages. Two famous incidents may be mentioned, both of which occurred shortly after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

In 1860, a volume called *Essays and Reviews* was published. It consisted of a series of articles by different writers, two of the most notable being Temple, Headmaster of Rugby and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and Jowett, afterwards Master of Balliol College, Oxford. The aim of the book was to promote free discussion of religious topics, about which differences of opinion, though known to exist, were being suppressed by Churchmen who feared to give offence to one another by open discussion. When the book appeared Frederic Harrison, a well-known Positivist, *i.e.* one who believed that science in itself contained the clue to all religion, welcomed the book as showing that its authors had already gone half-way along the road from Christianity to infidelity, and invited them to step on boldly and cover the rest of the journey. This misrepresentation at once stirred Bishop Wilberforce, who attacked the book as vigorously as he had attacked Darwin the year before. Others followed. Newman's old ally, Pusey, joined hands with the Evangelical Lord Shaftesbury in the onslaught. The bishops met at Fulham

Palace and issued an official circular to the clergy condemning the book, and hinting that the opinions expressed in it were inconsistent with the profession of faith enjoined upon the clergy by the Thirty-nine Articles. Two of the essayists were prosecuted before the ecclesiastical courts and were condemned, but the sentences were reversed in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. To-day the book is forgotten: it has played its part in broadening men's minds and better books on similar lines have taken its place. But if any one were to pull down a dusty copy of *Essays and Reviews* from the shelves of an old library to-day, he would be amazed that such moderate and cautious views should ever have produced such a storm.

Two years later (1862) Bishop Colenso published a book called *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined.* Colenso was a brilliant mathematician who had been made Bishop of Natal, in which diocese he had done excellent work on behalf of the native population. His book is concerned almost entirely with matters that are now regarded as the legitimate sphere of scientific criticism; he stated that only a small portion, if any, of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament, described in the Bible as 'Books of Moses') can have been written in the Mosaic age: that the historical existence of both Moses and Joshua is doubtful; that these books are compiled from two different and often contradictory sources; that Deuteronomy cannot be earlier than the reign of Manasseh, and that most of the rest of the legislation, *e.g.* the book of Leviticus, cannot be earlier than the Captivity. On nearly every one of these points—all, in fact, except the historical existence of Moses and Joshua—all modern students agree with Colenso, and his statement which gave so much offence at the time—"The Bible is not God's Word: but assuredly God's Word will be heard in the Bible by all who will humbly and devoutly listen for it"—is merely a rather vague way of stating a fact which is now generally accepted, namely, that the Bible

contains inspired truths of religion but is not 'verbally inspired,' nor authoritative as regards non-religious subjects. In 1863, however, the Church, led by the bishops, was unanimous in its condemnation of the book. The English bishops begged Colenso to resign his bishopric so as to avoid further scandal. Colenso refused and his own superior, the Bishop of Capetown, took measures to deprive him of his office. Legal difficulties made this impossible and, so far as the South African Church was concerned, the quarrel was only terminated by the death of Colenso in 1883.

The failure to realise the true relations of religion and science has been the greatest misfortune of the Church during the last half century. Again and again the Church has attempted to defend indefensible positions. Thus it has created in many minds the impression that religion itself is indefensible and opposed to truth. Even to-day many of the clergy, who understand the position well enough, are unwilling to express in the pulpit the views they hold in private from fear of offending earnest and worthy but narrow-minded and ignorant sections of their congregations. But Christianity has nothing to fear from the truth and everything to gain from it. To-day, as in Our Lord's day, the worst enemy of religion is hypocrisy.

(vi) *The Poetry of Robert Browning* (1812-1889). At a time when the official leaders of the Church were conducting so unskilfully their disastrous controversy with the scientists, one of the greatest influences keeping thoughtful and earnest people true to the Christian faith was the poetry of Browning. Bishop Westcott, one of the greatest of Victorian bishops in scholarship, in saintliness, and in influence over men, is said to have declared that the three writers to whom he owed most were St. John, Origen, and Browning; and a bishop of our own day has made for himself a similar list, except that he substitutes Plato for Origen. Many people regard Browning as in certain important respects, particularly in his deep insight

into human nature, the greatest English poet since Shakespeare. Since the days of Milton our greater poets had hardly been Christian at all in any strongly defined sense,[1] and our most popular writers of religious poetry, Keble, Wesley and others, had certainly not been 'great.' But here, in Browning, was a poet of the first order with an unusually wide range, a master of love poetry, a student of the Renaissance, a critic of music and of painting, who asserted again and again that in the Christian Faith alone could be found the solution of life's mysteries.

Three poems may serve as examples. The first is called *Cleon*. Cleon is an imaginary Greek pagan poet and philosopher of the first century A.D. He has just received gifts and congratulations from Protus, the tyrant of a neighbouring state: the poet, says Protus, is greater than the statesman because the work of the statesman is for his own generation only, whereas the poet 'lives for ever' in his works. Not so, says Cleon:

> "Thou diest while I survive?
> Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,
> In this, that every day my sense of joy
> Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
> By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen;
> While every day my hairs fall more and more,
> My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase—
> The horror quickening still from year to year,
> The consummation coming past escape
> When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy—
> When all my works wherein I prove my worth,
> Being present still to mock me in men's mouths,
> Alive still, in the praise of such as thou,
> I, I the feeling, thinking, acting man,

[1] Wordsworth is a partial exception, but he only began to write on definitely Christian lines after he had ceased to write great poetry. Another partial exception is Blake, who might be defined as a great Christian heretic. Apart from Milton and Blake and Browning, our only Christian religious poets who approach or attain greatness are Vaughan and Crashaw, poets of the Stuart period; Newman; and, at the end of the Victorian Age, Francis Thompson. It is interesting to notice that the last three named were Roman Catholics.

The man who loved his life so overmuch,
Sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,
I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state, revealed to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy.
. . . . . .
But no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and, alas,
He must have done so, were it possible!"

Here we have the thoughtful pagan who has reasoned out for himself the idea that there must be a future life, to justify this one. Another poem is called *An Epistle containing the strange medical experience of Karshish, the Arab physician.* Here we have the opposite case of a simple man who has never speculated upon life or immortality, but suddenly runs up against the evidence for it and is overwhelmed. Karshish is a travelling physician: he has just reached a village called Bethany, so he says in the report he is writing to Abib, his master in medicine. Here he has come across a very curious kind of village idiot, who had had a kind of epileptic fit many years before, and has ever since been talking nonsense about the man who cured him.

"It is one Lazarus, a Jew."

The above is the medical explanation, but Karshish cannot restrain himself from describing, with many apologies, the strange "hallucinations" of this "idiot." He excuses himself for wasting Abib's valuable time:

"And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad: should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not: though in writing to a leech
'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case."

At the very end of the poem the truth breaks out. Karshish is converted in spite of himself.

"The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-great were the All-loving too!"

The third poem, *Saul*, is the tale of how the shepherd poet David was brought to Saul and by his singing charmed away Saul's evil spirit. What did David sing? He himself tells over the story on the following day. First he sang all the familiar incidents of life, the shepherds' song, the reapers' song, the marriage song, the burial song, the priests' song, and gathered them all up in a great psalm in praise of natural human life. "Oh! the wild joys of living!" Then he passes beyond the mere span of mortal life and depicts Saul's immortal fame as the first of Israel's kings. But all, it seemed, in vain.

"Then first was I 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace; he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: thro' my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinised mine—
And, oh, all my heart how it loved him!"

And that was David's inspiration. Suddenly he saw in a flash that if he loved Saul and would do simply anything for him, then God must love all mankind and be ready to suffer for us.

"Would I suffer for him that I love? So would'st thou—so wilt thou!
. . . . . .
He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak;
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

CHAPTER XXI

SCOTLAND

(i) *General Characteristics.*

THE history of the Scottish Church since the Reformation is strikingly unlike that of the English. In England the Reformation, on its political side, was carried through by the government, and consequently the Established Church has enjoyed the advantages and also suffered from the drawbacks of an institution under government patronage. In Scotland the Reformation was a rebel movement, and the Church a national democratic organisation in almost continuous opposition to the government from its foundation in 1560 down to 1707, when it obtained recognition as the Established Church of Scotland in the Act of Union. Since 1707 it has been, like the Church of England, an Established Church, but its different traditions have stamped upon it a permanently different character, and it remains an independent self-governing body. Certain elements of State-control were, it is true, introduced after the Union, but these, though insignificant compared with the State-control accepted by the Church of England, were always resented by the best elements in the Scottish Church and were the cause of most of the ' secessions ' which have led to the formation of ' free ' Churches in Scotland.

A very rough parallel from the industrial world may make this clearer. The Church of England, with its bishops appointed by the Prime Minister and its affairs controlled by

Parliament, may be compared to a civil service department, for example, the Board of Education and the schools under its control. The 'Kirk' (to employ the old Scots word) in its rebel period of nearly a hundred and fifty years, may be compared to a Trade Union, a self-governing organisation recognised indeed by law, but existing mainly for the purpose of defending its interests against the government and against classes normally in alliance with the government. The Established Church of Scotland since the Union, again, may be compared with a nationalised industry as the term is now understood, or a 'National Guild,' an industry in which the Trade Union organisation ceases to be an 'opposition' and takes over the government of the industry with the approval of and in collaboration with the State.

It is interesting to note that the Church of England to-day shows signs of moving cautiously in the direction of the Scottish Church and introducing an element of *Presbyterianism*[1] or democratic control by its lay members. The Enabling Act of 1919 and the elected parochial councils established under that Act mark a beginning, but the movement has not yet gone far enough for its importance to be judged. (See Chapter XXIII., Section ii.)

(ii) *The Kirk and the Stuarts* (1560-1707). The Scottish Reformation was carried through with surprising suddenness, completeness, and unanimity. Practically it was the work of a single year, 1560. It is true that during the previous thirty years the doctrines of the Reformers had been preached, notably by George Wishart, the first of the small band of Scottish Protestant martyrs. None the less, in 1558, Scotland was a nominally Catholic country ruled by a French Catholic Regent, Mary of Guise, on behalf of her

[1] The word is here used in its strict sense, meaning 'eldership,' and suggesting a particular *political* organisation. No allusion is intended to the *religious* doctrines which are usually associated with the Presbyterian organisation but are not necessarily connected with it.

daughter Mary Queen of Scots, then in France; and in 1560, the French had gone and Scotland was virtually a Protestant Republic with John Knox, recently returned from Geneva and Calvin, as its 'President.' Scotland at that date was a small and poor country, with a population of only about half a million. And when we speak of Scotland during this period we should more correctly speak of the Lowlands. The larger northern half of the country, the Highlands, inhabited by wild, Gaelic-speaking clansmen, counted scarcely more than the 'wild West' counted in Canada and the United States before the days of railways. For the next two hundred years the Highlands remained largely outside 'the Kirk,' and were the source of picturesque, heroic, and futile rebellions in the Royalist cause from the days of Mary to the days of her great-great-great-grandson, 'bonnie Prince Charlie.'

In Scotland, as elsewhere, the Reformation was the work of an unnatural but unavoidable alliance between those who wanted pure religion and those who wanted pillage. Nowhere, probably, was the condition of the Church more scandalous in the period before the Reformation than in Scotland. The Church owned more than half the wealth of the country, but rich benefices were purchased for money by nobles or given to the king's bastards, and these in turn dilapidated them in favour of their own children, legitimate or illegitimate. Thus the great pillage had already begun under the old order, and to many of the nobles the Reformation was simply a device for throwing the bishoprics and abbeys on to the open market at low prices. When the Scots Parliament of 1560 enacted the new Confession of Faith drawn up by Knox and his colleagues, and abolished the Roman control and the ancient worship, the religious leaders also demanded that the tithe and the whole of the property of the Church should be made available for the support of the ministry, the schools and the poor; but this was dismissed as a 'devout imagination.'

In this financial struggle victory went, as might be expected, to the Mammon worshippers, but they disguised their victory under one of the oddest hypocrisies in religious history. The Reformation had swept away prelacy (*i.e.* bishops) along with popery, but certain respectable arguments could be advanced in favour of the restoration of bishops. It would bring the Church of Scotland into closer conformity with the Church of England, its natural ally against the forces of Rome, and it would give the Kirk representation in Parliament. None the less, the strictly religious held that prelacy was contrary to the Word of God. A compromise was arranged in 1572. Mary Queen of Scots was by then a prisoner in England and Morton, one of the worst of the Protestant pillagers, was Regent. It was arranged that bishops should be appointed to the old sees as a temporary expedient, for purposes of supervision until the organisation of the Kirk was more complete, but that they should be subject to the authority of the General Assembly of the Kirk. Appointments were then made, and it was soon discovered that these bishops were mere conduit-pipes through whom the wealth of the old Church was transferred to the nobility. For example, John Douglas was appointed to St. Andrews, the Scottish equivalent of Canterbury, after a compact by which he surrendered to Morton the greater part of the income of the see. These bishops were nicknamed "tulchans," a name given to calf skins stuffed with straw set up to persuade cows to yield their milk more freely.

Perhaps the Scottish Church did not lose much when it lost the bulk of its funds. In any case, with or without adequate funds, churches and schools were spread over Scotland with unflagging energy. The Scots have long been about the best educated nation in Europe, and Scottish education was the gift of the Kirk.

In general, the Kirk was from the first the embodiment of the Lowland Scots' national character; often harsh, narrow, and intolerant, but fired with a terrific energy alike

in thought and action. A modern Scots Presbyterian, defending his Church against an Anglican critic, writes of the leaders of the first hundred years [1] :—" They were Scotsmen, and therefore, when they went wrong they did it energetically, blowing a trumpet before them and defying all the world to refute them. Yes, and being Scotsmen they had, like ourselves, the moral and intellectual physiognomy which the world knows so well ; an ungainly people, shall I say, wearing our principles in a serious pedantic way, angular, lumbering, roundabout in our motions, argumentative, inflexible."

In doctrine the Scottish Reformers carried to its extremest limits the principle that all truth is to be found in the Bible literally interpreted, and that whatever is ' unscriptural ' is wrong. Thus not only Saints' days but the observation of Christmas and Easter were abolished, and the Communion was administered sitting round a table, in literal imitation of the Last Supper. Old and New Testament they revered alike, and their religious spirit, like that of the English Puritans, is sometimes nearer to Judaism than to Christianity. Much of what has already been said of Calvin and Calvinism (see Chapter XVII.) and of the English Puritans (see Chapter XVIII.) is applicable to the Scots, but the Scots brought to their religion an intellectual energy all their own.

The most distinctive feature of the Scottish Church, and one to be paralleled neither at Geneva nor in England, is the Presbyterian system of government applied on a national scale. Self-government within the Church is the logical outcome of Luther's doctrine, adopted by all the Reformers, of ' the spiritual priesthood of all believers.' In details the system took some time to establish itself in Scotland ; it is here described in its complete form.

At the base of the organisation is the Congregation of the parish itself, which appoints the minister. All matters affecting the spiritual well-being of the parish are entrusted

[1] R. Rainy, *Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland* (in reply to Dean Stanley).

to the *Kirk-session*, consisting of the minister, who is moderator (or chairman) thereof, and the elders, who are chosen, usually by election, from the communicant members of the Congregation. The minister alone is responsible for the actual conduct of public worship. Above the Kirk-session is the *Presbytery*, consisting of the ministers of a group of parishes and one elder elected from each parish. Above this is the *Synod*, embracing the equivalent of a diocese, and above the Synods the *General Assembly* or Parliament of the Kirk; each of these bodies consists of combinations of ministers and elders. Any complaint against a minister by his congregation must be brought before the Presbytery. From the decision of the Presbytery it is possible to appeal to the Synod and thence to the General Assembly, and, in practice, if the question of deposition is raised, the case generally comes up for final decision in this supreme court.

During the long struggle between the Kirk and the Stuarts, the General Assembly was for long periods extinguished. It met indeed much more seldom than the English Parliament; but it would be a mistake to suppose that Scottish Presbyterianism was as completely eclipsed as English political liberties. England had no democratic local government, but the Scottish Church had, and this maintained its existence through the worst periods.

Scots are rightly proud of this ancient organisation, and regard it as the mainstay of their religious life. "Take from us the freedom of Assemblies," said John Knox, "and you take from us the Evangel"; and the modern writer already quoted says: "Presbyterianism meant a system in which everyone, and first of all the common man, had his recognised place, his defined position, his ascertained and guarded privileges, his responsibilities inculcated and enforced, felt himself a part of a great unity, with a right to care for its welfare and to guard its integrity . . . When Episcopacy [in England] shall have trained the common people to care, as those of Scotland have cared, for the public interest of Christ's

Church, and to connect that care with their own religious life, as a part and a fruit of it, then it may afford to smile at the zealous self-defence of Scottish Presbyterianism."

It is impossible here to follow through in detail the story of that long self-defence. John Knox died in 1572, the year of the appointment of the first "tulchan" bishops, and found a worthy successor in Andrew Melville, who maintained the cause of the Kirk against James VI. (afterwards James I. of England) until, in 1606, he was summoned to London, imprisoned in the Tower, and afterwards allowed to go into exile and die abroad. Melville's position may be stated in his own words: "I must tell you," he said to James, "there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland; there is King James the Head of this Commonwealth; and there is Christ Jesus the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king nor a lord nor a head, but a member." James's religion, on the other hand, was the Divine Right of Kings, and it is small wonder that he found, as he told the English Puritans, that "a Scots presbytery agreeth as well with a monarchy as God with the devil." Melville's claim is really the claim of the mediaeval Popes in a new guise.

But it was not till 1637 that Charles I. and Archbishop Laud attempted to carry the policy of James to its logical conclusion and to destroy the whole Presbyterian system, setting up the Anglican system in its place. The introduction of a Prayer Book on English lines was the spark that fired the explosion. A National Covenant was drawn up, pledging all who signed it to defend the liberties of the Kirk. The King bowed before the storm and agreed to hold a General Assembly of the Kirk at Glasgow, the first for twenty years. The Assembly abolished Episcopacy: the King's High Commissioner dissolved the Assembly; but it continued to sit and prepared for war.

What followed is well known to readers not only of Scottish but also of English history. The so-called Bishops' Wars

(1639-1640), in which the army of the Kirk defeated the King's forces and invaded England, forced the King to summon the Long Parliament, and gave the English Puritan Parliamentarians their chance. The English Civil War began in 1642, and at the end of the next year the Scots made a Solemn League and Covenant [1] with the English Parliamentary leaders, under which the latter bound themselves to establish the Presbyterian system in England. Thus the Scots retaliated for the attack on their own Church. It was but the beginning of further troubles. There was no strong Presbyterian party in England, Cromwell and his army preferring Independency or Congregationalism, under which each congregation manages its own affairs unfettered by central control. In 1645 an Assembly was summoned at Westminster to create the English Presbyterian Church. Its labours were vain so far as England was concerned, but its famous *Shorter Catechism* was adopted by the Scottish Church.

But the Scots would not see their treaty torn up without a struggle. One party within the Kirk allied with the King, now Cromwell's prisoner, and invaded England, only to be crushed at Preston. Charles I. was executed, and Charles II. landed in Scotland and readily accepted the Covenant, just as he would have committed any other perjury to regain his throne. There was some point in Cromwell's rebuke when he told his former Scots allies that the Church of Christ could not be built with such untempered mortar. So another war followed : the Scots were defeated at Dunbar and Worcester (1650, 1651), and their country conquered and controlled by an English garrison. Yet Presbyterianism lived on in its indestructible Kirk-sessions.

After the Restoration Episcopacy was restored and the General Assembly prohibited. The next thirty years was a time of persecution, when many atrocities were committed by both sides.

[1] This *treaty* between English and Scottish parties should not be confused with the previous National Covenant.

William of Orange was himself a Dutch Presbyterian, and after the Revolution the Scots Parliament was allowed to abolish episcopacy and to restore the proscribed Confession of Faith. The people in many districts violently ejected ministers who had made themselves the tools of the bishops and the previous government: this incident is known as the "rabbling of the curates." Everything was restored except the General Assembly. Finally, in 1707, the Act of Union expressly restored the full rights of the Scottish Church by providing that each British Sovereign should at his accession take an oath to maintain "the government, worship, rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland."

The struggle of a hundred and forty-seven years was over.

(iii) *The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.* The eighteenth century saw in Scotland as in England a general lowering of religious vitality. It was the era of 'Moderatism.' The Moderates, as the dominant party in the Church were called, had their good as well as their bad points. They were free from the narrow-mindedness of Puritanism, which condemned so many harmless or excellent amusements, such as the theatre, and made the observation of Sunday an intolerable burden to ordinary people and particularly to children; but they were, undoubtedly, an indolent and lukewarm set, and the verdict of Scotland is against them. Their most distinguished representative was the historian Robertson, who caused scandal by his friendship with the infidel English historian Gibbon.

There were many reasons for the rise of Moderatism. In part it was mere reaction from the storms and fanaticisms of the Covenanting epoch. In part it was the growth of culture. Scotland emerged from her century of religious passions to find herself a member of the society of modern European nations, a backward member with much to learn. Art, literature, and trade became more interesting than religion. Thirdly, an Act passed by the more or less Jacobite Parliament of 1712 restored to their ancient patrons the right of

nominating ministers to Scottish benefices, thus destroying an important part of the Presbyterian system, the right of election by Kirk-sessions. The Kirk did not cease to protest against this Act, but its most important consequences did not appear till the nineteenth century.

It was not likely that the Covenanting spirit, which still survived, would be at ease in the eighteenth century Church, and in 1732 came the first of a series of 'secessions.' These seceders, led by Ebenezer Erskine, were in truth men of the seventeenth century born too late. They protested, not only against presentation by patrons, but also against the growth of toleration and the abolition of the penal statutes against witches in defiance of the 'law of God,' which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Other secessions followed, and also secessions from the seceders themselves, but they all alike agreed in attacking the principle of a Church Establishment as illustrated by the evils of the patronage system.

By far the most important secession occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century. By this time religious life had greatly revived and there was in Scotland as in England a strong Evangelical party. Since 1752 the General Assembly had established a compromise between Presbyterianism and the patronage system, whereby the presbytery was empowered to satisfy itself as to the 'life, learning, and doctrine' of the patron's nominee. In 1834, however, the General Assembly went further and declared it to be a fundamental law of the Church that no pastor should be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people, as ascertained by the vote of the male heads of families in the parish. Thus the old question of the 'two kingdoms in Scotland,' the Church and the State, on which James I. had quarrelled with Andrew Melville (see p. 299) was raised afresh. The Parliament of the Kirk had repudiated the Patronage Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. A case of a rejected presentee quickly came, as

it was bound to do, before the civil courts, and on an appeal the House of Lords declared that the resolution of the General Assembly was null and void. A long struggle followed within the Kirk. At first it was hoped that Parliament would repeal the Patronage Act. When this hope was disappointed, a large part of the Church of Scotland preferred to go back on its former resolution. The rest, however, were prepared to face the consequences of their action and, at the General Assembly of 1843, nearly half the members left the Assembly and formed the Free Church, which with magnificent energy quickly established itself side by side with the Established Church in every part of Scotland.

The central figure in the long struggle was Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), one of the greatest characters in Scottish Church history. He was in many respect a typical Evangelical, and he tells us that he owed his first real insight into religion to reading a book by Wilberforce. He was the first Moderator (or chairman) of the Free Church, but his services to the Established Church which he left were almost equally great, for he more than any other single man gave the victory to the Evangelicals in their struggle against the domination of the Moderates, and the movement which culminated in the secession of the Free Church ultimately led, thirty years later, to the abolition of patronage within the Established Church.

The Free Church movement coincided in date almost exactly with the English Oxford movement. Dr. Chalmers and his followers left the Established Church of Scotland just two years before Newman left the established Church of England, and though Newman did not carry most of his followers with him, there were many at the time who thought that he would and that the two movements taken together would demonstrate that Established State Churches were incompatible with a vivid religious life. But the influence both of Newman and of Chalmers bore fruit in the State Churches they had left and falsified these expectations.

Yet there is a profound difference between the Scottish and the English controversies, for the Scottish controversy was concerned with no fundamental *religious* issue, no question of Christian *doctrine*, but only with a constitutional issue of Church government. The fact is that on points of doctrine the Scottish Christians are, apart from the comparatively small Episcopalian and Roman Catholic bodies, remarkably well agreed, and it has sometimes been made a matter of reproach against them that they have fallen into disunion on apparently trivial points. Their reply would be that these points are not trivial and that the Scots have realised more fully than the Churchmen of some other countries the importance of having a sound constitution in Church as much as in State. It must also be added that the Scots have preserved a sense of the unity of the Divine Church amidst the divisions of their Churches. Their Churches, in fact, are not rival sects but only rival organisations. They have been much less liable than Episcopalians to fall into the error of supposing that members of other Churches are inferior in the sight of God. Hence the secessions have been followed by reunions. In 1847 most of the seceding bodies of the eighteenth century combined to form the United Presbyterian Church, and in 1900 this Church combined with the Free Church to form the United Free Church.[1] There are now, therefore, two great Churches, the United Free Church and the Established Church, dividing Presbyterian Scotland almost equally between them, and the union of these two Churches seems today (1921) to be on the verge of accomplishment.

[1] This union again brought a Scottish Church into the law courts with singular results. It was decided that the Free Church had not, under the articles of its foundation, the right to combine with the United Presbyterian Church and that, therefore, the whole of its property passed from it to the very small minority of its members that persisted in standing outside the combination. These were nicknamed the 'Wee Frees.' An Act of Parliament subsequently remedied this injustice.

CHAPTER XXII

MISSIONS

THE writer of a short history of England always has to (or ought to) apologise for the inadequate treatment he has given to the growth of the British Empire beyond the seas. For the same reason it is impossible within the scope of this book to give an adequate account of Christian missions. The subject is a vast one and requires a book or a series of books to itself. The barest outline is all that is possible here.

(i) *From the Arians to the Jesuits.* In the widest sense the Church is itself a missionary society and missionary work began when St. Peter first preached the gospel on the first Whitsunday, or, indeed, when Our Lord first spoke in parables to the villagers of Galilee. If we restrict the word ' mission ' to mean the preaching of the gospel to foreign and less civilised peoples, missionary work may be said to have begun when Christians of the Roman Empire first preached to the barbarians outside its frontier. From this point of view the first great missionary is Ulfilas (313-383), himself an Arian heretic, who preached Christianity as he understood it to the Goths beyond the Danube. He translated the Bible into Gothic, reducing the barbarous language to literary form and inventing an alphabet for the purpose.[1] The Bible

[1] Modern research has thrown doubts on the existence of this Gothic Bible.

of Ulfilas is the first literary production in the Teutonic group of languages to which not only German, but in large part English, belongs. The service he thus rendered to literature and education has been repeated since by hundreds of missionaries, who have translated the Bible into previously unwritten languages of Asia, Africa, America, and Australia.

The great missionary work of the Church during the Dark Ages was the conversion of Europe. When people speak of the slowness of missionary progress in Asia and Africa to-day, they forget that the conversion of Europe took well-nigh a thousand years, and that in most regions outside Europe active and continuous missionary work has only been in progress for a hundred and fifty years or less.

The intercourse with the Mahommedan world, which sprang up as a result of the Crusades, naturally turned missionary activity in the direction of Islam. The story of how St. Francis of Assisi went as a non-combatant missionary on the Fifth Crusade has already been told. Missionary work was to be one of the chief undertakings of the new Orders founded by Francis and Dominic. The greatest of these missionaries to the Mohammedans was Raymond Lull (1236-1315), a Spanish nobleman who entered the Franciscan Order. Like all great missionaries Lull realised that missionary work required careful preparation. He bought an Arab slave that he might learn Arabic, and founded a monastery where Arabic was taught to prospective missionaries. Owing to his efforts professorships of Arabic were founded at the universities of Paris, Oxford, and Salamanca. Finally he went to Africa alone at the age of fifty-six, and after twenty-three years of labour and hardship was stoned to death at the age of seventy-nine.

Lull had tackled what is still regarded to-day as the hardest and also the most important of missionary problems, the conversion of Islam. Meanwhile brilliant prospects were opening in Asia where the great Mongolian emperors, whose dominions stretched in the fourteenth century from Russia

to the Pacific coast, welcomed Christian missionaries, and a long line of bishoprics soon stretched itself from Jerusalem to Pekin. But owing to the difficulties and hardships of travel combined with the indifference of Christian Europe, where the mediaeval Church was already entering on its long decline, these magnificent beginnings were not followed up. The Mongolian power fell: a new dynasty in China, the Mings, excluded foreign religions, and the Ottoman Turks cut off Christendom from the East and carried the Moslem faith right into the heart of Europe.

At the end of the fifteenth century (1492) Columbus discovered America, and the Portuguese opened up the sea route to India and the East. Empire building on modern lines began, and was at first closely associated with missionary effort. Wherever the Spaniards sent traders and conquerors they also sent missionaries, generally Dominican friars, and the struggle began that has gone on ever since, between missionaries who want to give something to the native, and traders and settlers who want to get something out of him. The greatest of these early Spanish missionaries in South America was the Dominican, Las Casas. He devoted his life to the protection of the native, whether converted or unconverted, and it was in order to save them from slavery that he acquiesced in the plan of importing negro slaves from Western Africa. Before he died he realised that he had avoided one evil only by sanctioning a worse one.

But the greatest of all missionaries previous to modern times were the Jesuits. In South America their great achievement was the foundation of Paraguay in 1610. They saw that the only way to bring Christianity to the native was to rescue him first of all from the so-called "Christian" colonist, so they got leave to establish a missionary settlement far away in the centre of South America. Two Jesuit fathers first settled in Paraguay with 200 native Christians in 1610, and in spite of the hostility of neighbouring settlers the country was controlled by a

benevolent despotism of Jesuit priests for the next hundred and fifty years.

Even more remarkable was the work of Jesuit missionaries in India, begun by Francisco Xavier, one of the first associates of Loyola. He was an impetuous enthusiast and his career, heroic as it was, illustrates one of the temptations that beset the path of missionaries, the eagerness for quick results. He was almost entirely ignorant of native languages, being only able to recite a few prayers and the creed in Tamil; but, as he said, "I want no interpreter to baptize infants just born, nor to relieve the famished and naked who come in my way." His charming personality led many thousands to accept baptism, but they can hardly have been more than nominal Christians. His greatest successor, the Italian Nobili, who worked in the early seventeenth century, chose a wiser course in adapting himself to the habits of the Brahmins among whom he preached. He adopted their dress and their vegetarian diet, studied sympathetically their sacred books, dwelt on the similarities rather than the differences between Hinduism and Christianity, and even went so far as to assert that the Jesuits were descended from the god Brahma! He went, no doubt, much too far in the way of concession to native prejudice, but in attempting to train a native Christian priesthood, he was on right lines. He saw that Christianity in the East must be an oriental Christianity and not simply an imported foreign product.

At the present day Roman Catholic missions are still in advance of Protestant and Anglican missions so far as numbers are concerned. In 1910 there were said to be nine million Roman Catholic converts in the world and eight thousand priests as against five and a half million Protestant and Anglican converts and five thousand five hundred ordained missionaries. The figures in each case take no account of medical missionaries, women, and other lay missionaries. The strength of the Roman Catholic missions

lies in their religious orders, whose members dedicate themselves to life-long service and never return home.

(ii) *Protestant and modern missionary work.* It is a deplorable fact that while the Counter-Reformation spurred the Roman Church to missionary energy hitherto unexampled, as though to "call a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old," the early Protestants were quite indifferent to missionary work. Some of the leading reformers actually opposed it. As late as 1796 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a resolution that "to spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel amongst barbarous and heathen nations seems to be highly preposterous . . . whilst there remains at home a single individual without the means of religious knowledge." The first active missionary leader of importance in England was Dr. Bray, a clergyman of the Church of England, who was struck by the ignorance of the clergy at home and by the still greater ignorance of the clergy in the American colonies. His efforts led to the foundation of two great societies which are still actively at work to-day, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1698), to provide parish libraries and books for the clergy, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701), to organise direct missionary work among settlers and natives in the colonies. Just a hundred years later two other societies were founded by the energy of the Evangelicals, the Church Missionary Society (1799), which is the most extensive Protestant missionary society in the world, and the Bible Society (1804), which has translated the Bible in whole or in part into four hundred languages, many of which it has for the first time reduced to writing and equipped with alphabet, grammar, and dictionary. Missionary interest was, however, slow to produce volunteers and much of the early work of both missionary societies was done by Germans.

The chief Nonconformist missionary societies are the

London Missionary Society, founded 1795, which is mainly supported by the Congregationalists, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, founded 1813.

In British eyes the greatest missionary field is naturally India, with its immense and varied populations under British rule. The pioneer of British missions in India was William Carey (1761-1834), a poor shoemaker, who became a Baptist minister and by constant study learnt Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He met with every discouragement. At the Baptist Conference he was denounced as " a miserable enthusiast," and the East India Company, in an outburst of unwonted eloquence, declared that the scheme of sending missionaries to India was " pernicious, imprudent, useless, harmful, dangerous, profitless, fantastic. It strikes against all reason and sound policy, and brings the peace and safety of our possessions into peril." Times changed. Before the end of his long life Carey was employed by the Governor-General as a teacher of Bengali in his college for training young servants of the company ; and forty years or so after his death Lord Lawrence, one of the greatest of Indian Viceroys, said, " Notwithstanding all that the English people have done to benefit India, the missionaries have done more than all other agencies combined."

The number of native Christians in India to-day is about four million, a little over one per cent. of the whole population. Though the number is steadily growing, it is small ; but missionaries to-day are not much concerned with statistics of conversions. In India such statistics are specially misleading. Most of the open converts come from among the poor and ignorant, the outcasts : more important is the genuine but secret change of ideas that is going on among the high caste Brahmins themselves. Many of these are very closely in sympathy with Christianity, but are unwilling to sacrifice their social position by open conversion. Some, of course, come over and sacrifice all for Christianity, but it is very likely best for the cause of the Church in the long

run that the slow change of outlook should proceed for the time being uninterrupted by sensational results.

In the sphere of education, mission schools which are now under government inspection and receive state grants, have proved a valuable supplement to the government schools. The government schools, ever since, under the influence of Lord Macaulay (1834), it was decided to provide a purely western type of education, have been dominated by the examination system, and train the memory to acquire a mass of superficial and ill-digested knowledge. The mission schools, on the other hand, nearly all of which are open equally to converts and non-converts, are free to build up a more elastic and truly educational system, based on an understanding of Indian history, and a pride in Indian literature and Indian institutions.

After India, the greatest British mission field has undoubtedly been Africa. Here the great pioneers were Robert Moffat (1795-1883), by training a gardener, and David Livingstone (1813-1873), by training a cotton-spinner, both Scotsmen. In Africa the work of the missionary is not to transform an old unchristian civilisation, but to give Christian civilisation to savages. The missionary's worst enemy has generally been the agent of civilisation who is there for other purposes. In Livingstone's day the enemy was the Arab slave-raider. His activities are now a thing of the past, but his place is taken, in a more respectable and at least externally humane form, by the European settler. European settlers demand cheap labour, and if they cannot get it by fair means, they will not be content to go without. In many parts of Africa the native has been robbed of his land, and is now practically forced to work on it in someone else's interest. At the very moment of writing (1920) three bishops are appealing to the British Colonial Office against the introduction of an extended system of forced labour for the benefit of settlers in British East Africa.

It is natural, therefore, that the missionaries should often

be disliked by the English settlers and distrusted by the English colonial governments. Secular authorities have quite openly regretted the spread of Christianity, and given a preference to Mohammedan missionaries. Islam seems to them a much more suitable religion for natives. It maintains a certain low level of civilisation, and keeps the black man within his own sphere. Christianity teaches the equality of all men in the eyes of God, and however loyal to their government the missionaries may desire to be, the voice of Christ is heard in the Gospel they preach. Before we can decide which is right, the missionary or his critic, we must answer the question, What is the British Empire for? Does it exist to provide wealth for colonists and for shareholders at home in colonial companies, or does it exist to spread civilisation among the backward races? and, if it exists for both purposes, which is to be regarded as the more important when they happen to conflict? This is a question everyone must answer for himself. To many it appears that the missionaries are upholding the honour of the British Empire as truly as any soldier ever upheld it by death on the battlefield, and this view is by no means confined to missionary or even Christian circles. Sir Harry Johnston is one of our greatest authorities on Central Africa, and he is not a member of any Christian Church; but in his little book, *The Backward Peoples and our Relations with them*, he says, "The names of the missionaries should be inscribed in letters of gold on the temples of fame . . . when the Backward peoples reach independence and search true historical records for the personalities of their regenerators."

One of the most remarkable products of African Christianity is Khama, the great chief of Bechuanaland, who was baptised by a German missionary in boyhood. On his own small scale he deserves to rank with the great civilising kings of history. His whole reign was devoted to the gradual eradication of heathen customs, such as the killing of unwanted children and old people, but his hardest struggle was

with the European traders and the drink traffic. "Beer,"[1] he said, "is the source of all quarrels and disputes. I will have it stopped." After a long struggle he gained his point and was upheld by the British Government, which has now assumed a protectorate over his dominions. A British Blue-book of 1888 says of him: "Khama rules the tribe more by kindness than by severity. He is probably the best example of what a black man can become by means of a good disposition and of Christianity."

Every mission field has its own characteristics, and it is impossible to look at more than a few. One of the most interesting is Japan, the only non-Christian Great Power. There is no strong native religion in Japan, and the people as a whole are materialists whose substitute for religion is a very "Prussian" type of patriotism. Japanese Christians are not strong in numbers but they are strong in distinction. Among them in 1910 were numbered fourteen members of parliament, an admiral, a cabinet minister, several judges, and officers in the army and navy.

During the last half century our conception of missionary work has broadened. Missionaries no longer regard the 'direct method' of preaching as the only or even the most important method. Example counts for more than words. If the missionary goes and lives a life of Christlike helpfulness, whether as doctor or schoolmaster or instructor in farming and the arts of trade and civilisation, those whom he helps will discover the source of his energy and self-sacrifice, and he will be preaching Christianity indirectly all the time. Perhaps the most successful of all missionaries have been the medical missionaries, who seem to be carrying on the tradition of Christ's own work on the shores of Galilee. It is only recently, too, that the importance of women in missionary work has been fully realised. Perhaps they are more important than men. For the central social evil of

[1] Apparently this is much more intoxicating liquor than English beer.

nearly all heathen societies, whether high caste Brahmins, wealthy Mohammedans, or ignorant African savages, is the degrading treatment of the women, and here European women can help in ways impossible to men.

In 1895 Bishop Tucker of Uganda, the most flourishing missionary centre in Africa, wrote: "For the sake of the women and children—in other words, for the sake of the future of Uganda—it is absolutely essential that the ministry of English women should take its part in the work." Five ladies ventured the eight hundred miles' march from the coast, convoyed by the Bishop in person. On arrival they received such a welcome as is usually reserved for conquering kings, and on the first Sunday after they reached the capital, six thousand people thronged in and around the cathedral for a service of thanksgiving.

What are the main obstacles in the way of missions? One is our sectarian divisions. In 1891 there was a civil war in Uganda between English Protestant and French Catholic parties! But this difficulty is being overcome by mutual forbearance. Undoubtedly the worst obstacle to the success of missions is the way white Christians conduct themselves. The native who listens to the missionary cannot understand how it is that the people who oppress him and swindle him are called Christians also. And when he comes to Europe he sees much which makes him wonder whether Christianity is not a dream. And then came the Great War of the great Christian nations. There is no doubt that the Great War has been a heavy blow to the credit of Christianity in every field of missionary enterprise.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PRESENT DAY

(i) *The Lambeth Conference of* 1920.

IT is always difficult to write the history of the recent past, and this is particularly so in the case of religious history, where the importance of events has to be measured more by their future results than by any particular stir they may make at the time. It is as yet too early to measure the effects of the war upon the Churches. During the war itself an excessive optimism prevailed, and it was supposed that the trials of the time were bringing the thought of God back into the minds of many who had ignored Him. Since the war the outlook seems to have been rather pessimistic, owing to the failure of the Churches to mitigate the bitter and unchristian feelings that the war necessarily engendered. But it is too early to attempt a history of religion during the war period.

The Report of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 provides a convenient standpoint from which to review the position of the Church of England to-day. The first Lambeth Conference met in 1867 at the suggestion of the Canadian Church, and it has since met every ten years, the last meeting being postponed till 1920 on account of the war. It is a Conference of the bishops, not only of the Church of England in the stricter sense, but also of the Episcopal Churches in the self-governing Dominions and the United States which are in communion with the English Church, and have been built

up on identical lines except for the fact that they are not 'established,' *i.e.* they are independent 'free' Churches in no way connected with the governments of the countries in which they work. The Conference has, of course, no binding authority on its members, but meets for the purpose of mutual discussion and mutual help. The number of archbishops and bishops who attended was 252, a figure which it is interesting to compare with the 318 bishops present at the Council of Nicaea sixteen centuries before. Dioceses are of course far larger to-day, and the smaller number at Lambeth represents a very much larger organisation.

The Conference realised that the most important of all subjects was the reunion of the Churches. Ever since the Reformation, indeed ever since the split of the Eastern and Western Churches five hundred years earlier, the cause of Christianity has been crippled by disunion. But it is realised now, much more fully than in the past, that reunion cannot and indeed ought not to be brought about by restoration of uniformity. It is as impossible and as undesirable to abolish the distinguishing characteristics of the various Churches as it would be to abolish the distinguishing characteristics of the various nations. We want a League of Nations and a League of Churches. "It is not by reducing the different groups of Christians to uniformity, but by rightly using their diversity . . . But we are convinced that this ideal cannot be fulfilled if these groups are content to remain in separation or to be joined together only in some vague federation." [1]

Reunion will not be achieved in a day or in a year, but, like the ideal (as distinct from the actual and nominal) League of Nations, it *must* be achieved, and the task of achieving both Leagues must be pursued steadily and patiently. For of both it may be said, either they will be achieved or Christian civilisation will fail.

[1] From the Encyclical Letter introducing the Report (which has been published by the S.P.C.K.).

For the task in hand the English Church has unique opportunities. Like the Roman Church it is world-wide: unlike the Roman Church it is highly flexible in organisation, and stands mid-way between the Catholic and the Protestant positions, embracing much if not all of both.

The second topic of the Encyclical Letter drawn up by the Conference is the position of women in the Church. The bishops recognise that the Church, like the State, has been in the past far too much of a man-made and man-controlled institution. At the same time they seek to avoid the modern error of supposing that differences of sex are of no account in public life. They suggest the revival of the order of Deaconesses as it existed for a time in the primitive Church, to prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation, and to assist in all branches of parish work specially connected with women. They also agreed that opportunities should be given to women duly approved by the bishop of the diocese, to preach in the churches.

A committee of the Conference was appointed to examine three modern movements which, though outside the Christian faith, yet recognise the existence of the unseen spiritual world: Christian Science, Spiritualism, and Theosophy. The report of the committee is remarkably sympathetic. While pointing out what it conceives to be the errors of these movements, it lays stress on their good points and the lessons that the Church can learn from them. More particularly, it is admitted that the existence and the popularity of these movements is largely due to the failure of the Church to live up to its own high ideals. It may safely be said that no body of bishops would have issued so broad-minded and charitable a report at any time before the twentieth century.

The committee appointed to consider Industrial and Social Problems write: "We (the Church) cannot claim a good record with regard to Labour questions. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution only a minority of the members of our Church have insisted on the social application of the

Gospel. Now that the conscience of the Christian community has been stirred, we must be content to bear the accusation that we are only trying to make ourselves popular with Labour, because Labour is now a dominant power. The accusation is not true. We are honestly trying to see and to speak the truth."

The Report on Industrial Problems is on the whole a rather disappointing document on account of the anxiety of the bishops to avoid taking a side in party politics. The relationship of the Churches to politics is always difficult. If the Church throws its weight on to one side in a controversial question it will alienate sincere Christians who hold the opposite political opinion. And yet politics are closely bound up with morals, and morals are closely bound up with religion. It is easy, but not very helpful, to say that the Church ought to stand for the right *ends*, for instance, the abolition of poverty and slums, and remain neutral as between various *means* of securing those ends. Ends and means are not so easily distinguishable.

In the international sphere the Conference whole-heartedly supports the League of Nations, and points out that its work can only be successful if it has an enthusiastic public opinion behind it. It is plain that the effort to create that public opinion is a prime duty of the Church.

The Report on Missions contains some important remarks on the relationship of missionary work and empire.

" In dealing with the large number of persons in their colonies and dependencies who profess different faiths, the policy of the British and American Governments has always been that of strict religious neutrality. We heartily endorse this policy, having no desire to see any kind of political influence brought to bear upon people to induce them to change their religion. But we cannot fail to notice that in certain instances the ferment produced among primitive races who have received the Gospel of Christ has led to hindrances being placed in the way of missionaries in the

prosecution of their work, and to a preference being shown for other faiths. The Church would be failing in her work if the acceptance of the truths did not awaken in her converts a higher sense of their dignity as human beings, of their rights as well as their duties, and any government which has the real interest of the subject races at heart will be glad of such awakening even though, in civil life, it raises new problems to be solved.

" We hold it to be the duty of missionaries to look at their work from the Government point of view as well as from their own, and to adapt their methods, as far as is consistent with Christian morality and justice, to the policy which the Government is following in dealing with such peoples. On the other hand, we claim that no discrimination should be shown against the Christian Faith . . .

" In the present state of international relations there is a real danger that missionaries may be tempted to forward the commercial and political aims of their own nation, and we emphatically declare that such action lies entirely outside the scope of their proper functions."

(ii) *Self-government in the Church of England.* As has already been shown, the Scottish Reformation, starting as a rebel movement, developed and has always retained a system of democratic self-government. The English Reformation, on the other hand, being controlled throughout by the Crown, led to the establishment of royal supremacy over the Church. Queen Elizabeth tried to maintain that Parliament had no right to discuss Church questions, and Laud, while supporting king against Parliament in the political sphere, regarded the king as his master to be consulted in all points with regard to the Church.[1] When Parliament

[1] This policy of subjection of a Church to the civil authority is called Erastianism, from Erastus, a sixteenth century German writer. Laud, unlike modern High Churchmen, was a thorough Erastian.

took the place of the king as the supreme civil authority it also replaced him as the controlling authority over the Church, as is illustrated by the fact that the bishops are to-day selected by the Prime Minister, even though he might happen not to be a Christian at all.

This arrangement worked satisfactorily so long as Parliament was practically an assembly of lay Churchmen. But it became indefensible, at any rate in theory, when, early in the nineteenth century, Parliament was thrown open to Roman Catholics, Nonconformists and others. Even after this date—until, say, 1880—Parliament continued to take an intelligent and sympathetic interest in Church affairs, and placed many valuable reforms on the Statute Book. What has finally unfitted Parliament for this duty is the immense growth of political business, as a result of which scarcely any important and controversial measures outside the official programme of the Government can hope to become law. Out of 217 Church Bills introduced between 1888 and 1913, 33 were passed, one was defeated, and the remaining 183 were simply abandoned from lack of time.

Hence there arose a movement to create a self-governing machinery within the Church, and to secure from Parliament a recognition of its rights. This movement is strictly parallel with other movements quite outside the sphere of religion. One of the most fruitful political ideas of the last fifty years or so is the recognition that the principle of representative government is applicable not only to states and geographical units, such as towns and countries, but also to voluntary societies, membership of which depends on common aims or common occupations. The most striking examples are the Trade Unions, out of which has grown the movement which claims that, in one way or another, industries should themselves become self-governing units or 'guilds,' ruled by a 'cabinet' of Directors responsible to workers in the same way as the Cabinet of the nation is responsible to the House of Commons and the electorate.

This movement in the Church has a long history behind it, though the decisive steps have only been taken since the war.

In 1852 the ancient institution of Convocation was revived for the province of Canterbury, and eight years later that of the province of York in the same way. These assemblies were the 'parliaments' of the Church in the Middle Ages, and as such voted and controlled the taxation of the clergy. Their powers had been taken away by Henry VIII., but they continued to meet as little more than debating societies until 1717, when they were suspended on account of the Jacobite sympathies of the Church. Their revival, however, though it stimulated discussion within the Church, had no very great importance. The legislative powers of the Convocations were, of course, not restored, and their composition gave very meagre representation to the ordinary parish clergy, on whom the whole life of the Church must necessarily depend.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a variety of assemblies were developed, containing both clerical and lay representatives. The chief were the Diocesan Conferences which are summoned by the bishop of the diocese to advise and assist him, especially in matters of finance; and the Church Congress, an informal annual gathering of Church people of both sexes, open to all who choose to attend. Further, two 'Houses of Laymen' were added to the Convocations, consisting of lay members of each diocese elected by the lay members of the Diocesan Conferences. Finally, in 1902, the two Convocations agreed to hold occasional joint meetings as a National Church Council, with three Houses, of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity.

Parliamentary supremacy remained, however. The first important step towards modifying it was taken in 1913 when the National Church Council passed, with only one dissentient vote, a resolution requesting the Archbishops to appoint a committee "to inquire what changes are advisable

in order to secure in the relations of Church and State a fuller expression of the spiritual independence of the Church." A committee, containing both clergy and laymen (among the latter being an ex-Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour), was appointed, and produced its report in 1916, and an association was thereupon founded, known as the Life and Liberty Movement, to rouse the interest of church people throughout the country in the cause. The president of the Life and Liberty Movement was Dr. (now Bishop) Temple, the son of one of the greatest of recent Archbishops of Canterbury. As a result, in 1919 an Enabling Bill was carried through Parliament, which constitutes a ' charter of liberty ' for the Church of England.

The Enabling Act enables a National Assembly of the Church of England to legislate for the Church under the following conditions. Measures passed by the National Assembly are to be submitted to an Ecclesiastical Committee of the two Houses of Parliament, consisting of fifteen members of the House of Lords nominated by the Lord Chancellor and fifteen members of the House of Commons nominated by the Speaker. If the measure is accepted by the Ecclesiastical Committee, it is to be laid before both Houses of Parliament, and it will become law if both Houses of Parliament pass resolutions to that effect.

It might seem at first sight that these elaborate arrangements make very little real difference. Parliamentary supremacy remains in a new form. But it must be borne in mind that the main objection to the old form of Parliamentary supremacy was that it blocked reform not by ill-will but by sheer inattention or inability to find time for Church legislation. By the Enabling Act all the laborious business of first, second, and third readings, and " committee stage " is lifted from the shoulders of Parliament. The authentic will of the Church is already expressed in suitable legislative form and Parliament has merely to say ' yes ' or ' no,' and it is reasonable to assume that, if the Church has the energy and intelligence to use its new machinery in such a way as

to inspire the respect of outsiders, Parliament will normally say 'yes.'

It has been shown in the chapter on Scotland that the centre of indestructible vitality in the Presbyterian system of the Scottish Church lay not in the General Assembly but in the local Kirk-sessions. It will have to be the same with the new organisation of the English Church. In 1921 a Parochial Church Councils Act was passed by Parliament under the new machinery of the Enabling Act, defining the constitution and the powers of the new Parochial Councils. Much controversy had taken place during the preceding years as to the franchise. Should the electorate be limited to communicants or extended to all baptised persons who signed a declaration of membership of the Church of England? The latter and wider franchise has been adopted, and the electoral roll is open to all baptised persons of both sexes and eighteen years of age who sign such a declaration. The powers of the Parish Councils are so framed as to safeguard the proper rights of the parson. Their success would seem to depend, first, on the keenness and energy of the elected councillors, and, second, on a generous recognition by both parso and council of the position and responsibilities of the other.

The National Assembly consists, like its fore-runner, the Representative Church Council, of three Houses—Bishops, Clergy, and Laity.

The House of Clergy is identical with the Lower House of Convocation, the system of election to which was reformed under a Canon, following the *Convocation of the Clergy Measure*, 1920 (the first measure passed by the Assembly). The new House of Clergy, in which a considerably enlarged representation is given to the parochial clergy, sat for the first time in the July session of 1921. The House of Laity is chosen by indirect election, the members of the parochial Church Councils electing members of the Diocesan Conference and the Diocesan Conference electing members of the House of Laity.

The new constitution is typically English in that it avoids a violent breach with the past. The Church remains in the legal sense a national institution, connected to the State by special ties. It does not become a " Free Church " in the sense in which Nonconformists use the term. The nomination of bishops by the Prime Minister remains untouched. Those who prefer the " Free Church " tradition must regard it as a half-hearted measure. To such one may reply :— first, that a completely " Free " Church could not possibly continue its claim to be the " Established " Church of England under modern conditions, and secondly, that, when exercised wisely and sympathetically, the nomination of the bishops by the Prime Minister is a security against the monopoly of high office by the members of any one predominant party. It has generally been the wisdom of the English Church to recognise and even welcome diversities of opinion, and what survives of the old Erastian tradition is a wholesome safeguard against mechanical majority rule.

(iii) *Conclusion.* Optimism and pessimism are two opposite tendencies of the human mind and both sway it unreasonably. In the sphere of secular affairs people are generally optimists. The history of England is generally treated as an almost continuous progress : Parliament gets stronger and stronger, the Empire gets bigger and bigger, wealth, comfort and luxury steadily increase. In the sphere of religious affairs people are more often pessimists : they point backwards to ' ages of faith ' ; they note that it is a continually dwindling proportion of the population that ' profess and call themselves Christians ' ; they note that the Church itself seems to beat a continuous retreat and abandon as untenable beliefs taken for granted in previous generations.

This pessimism is not justified. In matters of religion there has certainly been no continuous progress, any more than there has been continuous progress in art or literature,

but the attitude of mind which is simply content to deplore the ' good old times ' is not only unhealthy but is based on ignorance.

Each of the four periods into which this book is divided illustrates the falseness of the pessimistic view.

The old and discarded conception of Hebrew history seemed to favour the pessimistic interpretation. Moses was supposed to have revealed all the religious truth contained in the Old Testament, and the story that followed was a long succession of backslidings. We now know, however, that what was revealed through Moses was only a rudiment : that the story of the successive generations of prophets is a ' progress ' of the most inspiring kind : that it is only after the Captivity that the Jews as a whole can be said to have been a religious nation.

In the second period, again, the decline from the period of the Apostles to the period of the Arian controversy was in a sense, no doubt, very steep. But one must not overlook the fact that it was the price that had inevitably to be paid for an equally real gain. When a small and picked band of leaders set out to convert an empire and succeed, we cannot turn their success into failure simply by taking the average quality of the small band of leaders and comparing it with the average quality of the millions of their followers four centuries later.

The third period is so vast and various that it seems to support neither the optimistic nor the pessimistic theory. But the fourth period strongly supports a reasonable and sober optimism. The history of Christianity in England from the days of Elizabeth down to quite recent times is the history of a series of vigorous attempts to galvanise the Established Church into a state of real and active Christianity, and of the failure of them all, followed by nonconformist secessions and sectarian bitterness. To-day, the Church of England, though reduced in numbers (like Gideon's army), is probably more alive than it ever

was before, more earnest, more humble, more intelligent, and the spirit of intolerance and persecution, though not dead, is dying.

This is not the place to enumerate and enlarge upon the activities of strictly contemporary movements and organisations, which witness to the vitality of contemporary Christianity. It is significant, however, that the most vigorous and active of such movements are not confined within the limits of any particular Church or sect, but are simply Christian in the broadest sense of the word. Everyone, for example, remembers the astonishing expansion of the Young Men's Christian Association to minister to the comfort of our soldiers and sailors in the Great War. Some might object that there was nothing specially Christian or religious about this excellent work. A full rejoinder to this objection would involve us in definitions of what we mean by 'Christian' and by 'religion.' Let it suffice to say that the work was there to be done and that it was a definitely religious organisation that stepped forward to do it. Less conspicuous in the Press but perhaps even more important in its probable influence in the future is the Student Christian Movement. The Student Christian Movement began in 1892 as a federation of Christian Unions formed by students in the various universities of Great Britain. In 1896 it combined with similar movements in America and Germany to found the World's Student Christian Federation, and this organisation has now spread itself all over the globe. At the moment of writing there are over a quarter of a million members, and these, be it noted, are all university students, for ex-students ('old boys') are not counted on the roll of membership. It is difficult to exaggerate the influence that such a Movement may have as the generations pass rapidly through its hands. The ideal of the Movement is the sublime purpose of Christianity itself, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. Many movements have set before themselves this purpose in many ages, but never

before perhaps has there been a movement so unhampered by sectarian and political divisions, so free from entanglement in the controversies that have made Christians enemies of one another.

Optimism is, indeed, better justified as regards religious history than as regards secular, for it is attended by fewer dangers. In secular history there is a real danger that pride in the achievements of our own nation may lead to a stupid arrogance and self-satisfaction, because we have no obvious standard or ideal to set against our achievement to show how miserably inadequate it is. But we are not likely to take a too satisfied view of the Church of to-day so long as we compare it not only with its past self but also with what Christ meant it to be.

Perhaps the extraordinary vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, its many crimes and follies, and its long periods of stagnation, are in themselves an argument for optimism. A devout Catholic of our own day is reported to have said that the strongest evidence of the Divine guidance of the Church is its history, since no merely human institution could have survived so many crimes and errors. There is truth in this paradox. "Christianity," another modern writer has said, "has not failed, for it has not yet been tried." Both in the international and in the industrial sphere we have assumed (without trial) that Christian principles were not practical. For 'Love your neighbour' we have substituted competition, and competition unrestrained is always apt to lead its votaries down the slope towards force and fraud, violence and robbery, the principles of Barabbas. And now we have had a forcible reminder that these principles at any rate are not practical, for, whether in the international or in the industrial sphere, they would lead, at the bitter end, to the suicide of the human race. Meanwhile all down the ages some have been trying to try Christianity, and each generation has taken up the task afresh undeterred by the apparent failures of its predecessors.

Many of the best minds in the world to-day claim to be disciples of Christ, but reject the Churches as unworthy of Him after whom they are called. The debt of these men to the Churches they despise is greater than they know, for but for the work of the Churches during nineteen hundred years, the figure of Christ would have dropped out of human knowledge. Still, this wide-spread acknowledgment of Christ in combination with rejection of the Churches is one of the most striking features of modern thought, and for Churchmen in all the Churches would seem to suggest two conclusions: first, that our Foundation is Rock: secondly, that our superstructure is in need of repair.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

Part IV.

1. *Wakeman, H. O., History of the Church of England* (*Rivingtons*). A useful text book with a strong Anglo-Catholic bias.

2. *Trevelyan, G. M., England under the Stuarts* (*Methuen*). Contains brilliant and sympathetic descriptions of various aspects of Puritanism.

3. *Balleine, G. R., History of the Evangelical Party* (*Longmans*). A good book, with interesting biographical details of Wesley and others: rather ignores the shortcomings of Evangelicalism.

4. *J. L. & B. Hammond, The Town Labourer*, 1760-1832 (*Longmans*). The two chapters in this brilliant book entitled "The Conscience of the Rich" and "The Religion of the Poor" serve to fill in the gaps in No. 3.

5. *F. Warre Cornish, History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century* (*Macmillan*), *2 vols.* A sound, conservative book, full of useful detail on all subjects except the Christian Socialists.

6. *C. E. Raven, Christian Socialism*, 1848-1854 (*Macmillan*). An interesting account, full of detail, but inclined to overrate the capacity of the Christian Socialists, which unhappily fell far short of their good intentions.

7 and 8. *Mrs. Creighton, Missions*, and *W. B. Selbie, Nonconformity* (*Williams & Norgate*). Both good specimens of the Home University Library.

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